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# LUDENDORFF'S OWN STORY



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# **LUDENDORFF'S OWN STORY**







**ERICH VON LUDENDORFF**  
Quartermaster-General of the German Army

# LUDENDORFF'S OWN STORY

August 1914 - November 1918

*The Great War from the Siege of Liege  
to the Signing of the Armistice as viewed  
from the Grand Headquarters of the  
German Army*

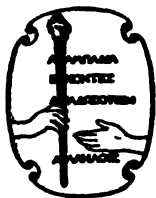
By

ERICH VON LUDENDORFF

Quartermaster-General of the German Army

With Frontispiece  
and Many Maps

VOL. I



Harper & Brothers Publishers  
New York and London



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**To The Heroes Who Fell  
Believing in Germany's Greatness  
This Book is Dedicated**



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## PREFACE

**I**T has been my destiny to hold various high appointments. Upon Field-Marshal von Hindenburg and myself, in conjunction with other men, devolved the task of conducting the defense of the Fatherland.

In these pages I propose to give an account of those deeds of the German people and their army with which my name will for all time be associated. I shall tell of my strivings and of all that I lived through in this struggle of the nations—how the German people fought as men have never fought before, how they endured, and how their efforts were gradually paralyzed.

Germany has not yet had time for introspection and heart-searching. She is too heavily weighted down. And yet she can take heart from the magnificent deeds of her army, and from all they, too, accomplished who worked at home. But if she wishes to learn anything from the succession of events which culminated in her undoing she has no time to lose, for the world's history strides ruthlessly on and tramples underfoot those nations who tear themselves to pieces by internal conflict.

LUDENDORFF.

Written at Hesselholmsgard, in Sweden, between November 1918 and February 1919; completed in Berlin by June 23, the day on which we accepted (!) the Peace.



# LUDENDORFF'S OWN STORY

## MY THOUGHTS AND ACTIONS

The Nature of the War—The Army and the Home Country—My  
Attitude Toward Political Questions—Field-Marshal von Hinden-  
burg—Life on the Staff—My Colleagues.

### I

**T**HE *coup de main* at Liège was the first of the series of German victories. The decision was a bold one, and the execution extremely daring.

The campaigns of 1914, 1915, and the summer of 1916 in the East were tremendous achievements, equal to the greatest military feats of any age. They made the highest demands both on the commanders and the troops. The Russians were then greatly superior in numbers to the allied German and Austro-Hungarian armies opposed to them.

But, indeed, the operations which Field-Marshal von Hindenburg and I had to conduct from August 29, 1916, the day we assumed supreme command, rank among the most formidable in history. Nothing more awe-inspiring and destructive has ever been seen on earth. Germany, inferior in numbers and with weak allies, was contending against the world. Decisions of the highest importance had to be made. They were the inevitable and logical result of the situation, our



general conception of war, and the particular circumstances of this war.

The armies and fleets fought as they had fought in days past, even though numbers and equipment were mightier than ever before. What made this war different from all others was the manner in which the nations supported and reinforced their armed forces with all the resources at their disposal. Only in France, in 1870-71, had anything of the kind been seen before.

In this war it was impossible to distinguish where the sphere of the army and navy began and that of the people ended. Army and people were one. The world witnessed the War of Nations in the most literal sense of the word. The great powers of the earth faced one another in united concentrated strength. And not only between the armed forces did the combat rage along those huge fronts and on distant oceans; the very soul and vital force of the enemy were attacked in order to corrode and paralyze them.

With big battalions it is neither difficult nor very risky to wage war and fight battles. But in the first three years of the war the Field-Marshal and I never found ourselves in that enviable position. We could but act according to our duty and conscience, and adopt the measures we deemed necessary to gain the victory. And during this period success crowned our efforts.

When, in March 1918, we attacked with the balance of numbers more in our favor than had previously been the case, our strength sufficed to win great victories, but not to bring about a rapid decision. Then it dwindled, while the enemy grew stronger.

## II

This world-wide War of Nations made enormous demands on us Germans, on whom its whole overwhelm-

ing burden fell. Every individual had to give his very utmost, if we were to win. We had literally to fight and work to the last drop of blood and sweat, and with it all maintain our fighting spirit and, above all, our confidence in victory—a hard but imperative necessity in spite of the dearth of food which the enemy inflicted upon us, and the onslaught of his propaganda, which was of amazing force, if unobtrusive.

Our army and navy are rooted in the nation as is the oak in German soil. They live upon the homeland, and from it they draw their strength. They can keep, but cannot produce, what they need, and can only fight with the moral, material, and physical means which the country provides. These means make victory possible—faithful devotion and unselfish self-sacrifice in the daily contest with the miseries of war. They alone could secure Germany's final success. With them our country waged the titanic conflict against the world, even allowing for the assistance of our allies and the exploitations of occupied territories as far as the laws of land warfare permitted.

The army and navy had thus to look to the homeland for its constant renewal and rejuvenation in morale, numbers, and equipment.

It was essential to maintain the morale and war spirit of those at home at the highest pitch. Woe to us if they should fail! The longer the war lasted the greater were the danger and the difficulties, and the more imperious grew the demands of the army and navy for spiritual and moral reinforcement.

The very last resources, both in men and material, had to be made available, and devoted to the prosecution of the war.

These were enormous tasks for the country. The homeland was not only the basis on which our military power rested, and which must therefore be carefully

safeguarded; it was the life-giving source which had to be kept clear, lest it lose anything of that virtue wherewith it steeled the nerves and renewed the strength of the army and navy. The nation was in need of that inner spiritual strength which alone enabled it to reinforce the army and navy. The power of the nation and that of the armed forces were so intermingled that it was impossible to separate them. The fighting efficiency of the forces before the enemy depended absolutely upon that of the people at home.

That meant that at home every one must work and live for the war in a way that had never been known before. It was the duty of the Government, and especially the Imperial Chancellor, to direct and foster that spirit.

Upon this Minister devolved another important war task—the direction of operations against the enemy's home fronts. Should Germany neglect to use this powerful weapon, the effects of which she daily experienced in her own body? Should we not attack the morale of our enemies in the same way as they were, unfortunately but so successfully, attacking ours? This contest had first to be transferred to neutral countries, and thence into hostile territory. But Germany always lacked one mighty means of propaganda—starvation of the enemy peoples by blockade.

The Government had great problems to solve if the war was to be brought to a successful conclusion. No greater demand has ever been made on a German government than to place the united strength of the German people at the disposal of the Emperor in order to secure victory in the field and carry on the war against the spirit and morale of the enemy nations. Thus the action and conduct of the Government attained decisive importance. This meant that Government, Reichstag, and people must devote themselves

utterly to the idea of war. That was the only way: the power to wage war had its source at home and found its expression at the front.

The great aim of peace could be attained only by relentless prosecution of the war. By working for the war, therefore, the Government at the same time paved the way for peace.

Soon after we were summoned to assume the supreme command, and had time to consider the situation in all its bearings, the Field-Marshal and I laid our views as to the requirements of the army and navy before the Imperial Chancellor, and discussed the problems which they raised for the country. We called upon him to co-operate in prosecuting the war, and were buoyed up with hope in spite of the menacing aspect of the situation.

The Government had welcomed our appointment to the supreme command. We met the authorities with frank confidence. Soon, however, two schools of thought, represented by their views and ours, began to come into conflict. This divergence of view was a great disappointment to us and vastly increased our burden.

In Berlin they were unable to accept our opinion as to the necessity of certain war measures, or to steel their wills to the point of magnetizing the whole nation and directing its life and thought to the single idea of war and victory. The great democracies of the Entente achieved this. With an iron will, Gambetta in 1870-71, and Clemenceau and Lloyd George in this war, enrolled their peoples in the service of victory. Our Government failed to recognize this inflexible purpose, and the definite intention of the Entente to destroy us. It should never have doubted it. Instead of concentrating all our resources and using them to the utmost in order to achieve peace on the battle-field, as

the very nature of war demands, the authorities in Berlin followed a different path: they talked more and more about reconciliation and understanding, without giving our own people a strong warlike impetus at the same time. In Berlin they believed, or deceived themselves into believing, that the hostile nations were longing to hear words of reconciliation and would urge their governments toward peace. So little did they understand the mind of our enemies, both people and governments, their strong national feeling, and unbending will. In Berlin they had learned nothing from history. They only felt their own impotence in face of the enemy's spirit; they lost the hope of victory, and drifted. The desire for peace became stronger than the will to fight for victory. The road to peace was blocked by the will of the enemy, whose aim was our destruction; in seeking it the Government neglected to lead the nation by the hard road to victory.

The Reichstag and the people found themselves without that strong leadership which, generally speaking, they longed for, and slid with the Government down the slippery way. The tremendous questions arising out of the war were more and more thrust on one side, for people's minds were occupied with questions of internal politics and thoughts of self. This meant the ruin of our country.

Possibly the revolution which is now shattering Europe may usher in a new world order and make the thoughts and feelings of the nations more ready for a peace of justice and reconciliation. But certainly the armistice and peace conditions point the other way. In any case, during the time I was First Quartermaster-General there were no signs of any change.

The Supreme Command took the same view as President Wilson, who supported his demand for a great American naval program with the comment that he

would think it senseless for America to adjust her naval program to a future world policy, since the latter had not yet been decided.

In November 1918 the president of the Soldiers' Council of the Fourth Army wrote:

"Some people may think that the Revolution can be built up on ideals. Those who are at the front must agree that the world-policy of the Entente at the present time is infected by materialism."

The astonished world, its ideals shattered, now perceives this clearly. The German nation has been misled, and is now paying for its delusion with its life.

General Headquarters urged the view that it would be time enough for us to lay down our arms and think about understandings when human nature had undergone a change; otherwise we were bound to suffer. The palm of peace is no defense against the sword. As long as human beings, and, above all, our enemies, remained the same as mankind has ever been, Germany, and in any event the Field-Marshal and I, as the responsible military commanders, must retain our hold of the sword and keep it sharp. It was, therefore, our serious duty, in dealing with the Government, to insist on the necessary war measures being carried out, and to try to infuse into it that degree of determination which we thought was required.

In all questions General Headquarters addressed itself to the constitutional authorities. The war required rapid and far-reaching decisions at any moment, and thus stimulated that quality of resolution on which it was always making demands. In Berlin the old peace routine held sway. Replies, even to the most important questions, often did not arrive for weeks. In consequence of this extraordinary dilatoriness on the part of the Berlin authorities, and of their failure to grasp the necessities of the war, the tone

of our correspondence at times became somewhat acrimonious. This we regretted, but we were consumed with justifiable impatience. Immediate action was called for, since it was often a question of averting some irreparable disaster.

In peace-time the Imperial Government was supreme. The Foreign Office considered itself above all criticism. The Government departments only gradually accustomed themselves to the idea that on the outbreak of war a new authority, General Headquarters, had come into being, which not only shared the responsibility with the Imperial Chancellor, but bore such an enormous proportion of it that it had necessarily to try to make up for their inertia by displaying greater energy on its own part. I could have wished that the Government had recognized this simple situation as clearly. The position of General von Moltke and General von Falkenhayn in relation to the Government was essentially the same as that of the Field-Marshal and myself.

The Government went its own way, and, as regards the wishes of General Headquarters, neglected nothing which it considered essential. But much was left undone that had been insisted on as urgently necessary for the prosecution of the war.

Right after war broke out, General Headquarters was obliged to take action in connection with several matters which were really the sphere of other authorities. The press, the censorship, precautions against spies and sabotage at home, dealing with revolutionaries—all these wide fields were left to the unaided efforts of the military authorities, to the detriment of the conduct of the war. Uncertainty as to their powers and lack of personnel checked the initiative of the authorities concerned. Their strong sense of responsibility urged the General Staff to creative work. It was better able to meet the requirements in personnel than

other departments, particularly from among officers of the reserve on leave with previous training. And so the direction of this work fell into the hands of the General Staff. The execution, however, often remained in the hands of the home authorities. The line of demarcation, within which these authorities considered themselves to be solely responsible, was not clearly defined. Friction was unavoidable. This would have been avoided by that resolute leadership at home for which General Headquarters often asked.

## III

As First Quartermaster-General it was often my duty, personally, to lay the demands of General Headquarters before the Government.

Of political personages and parties I took no account. Those parties which were forever talking about "understanding," instead of fostering the war-like spirit of the nation, did not recognize the need for the demands put forward. The Government shared their views. And thus the Government and the Majority parties found themselves in agreement and adopted an antagonistic attitude toward me and my military ideas and wishes.

It was obvious that I had more supporters among those parties which, like myself, regarded an understanding as impossible in view of the enemy's determination to destroy us, and therefore wished the war to be carried on with the greatest energy. I never asked for their support, but they trusted me. These parties belonged to the Right—the Minority. And so, although I thought only of the war, the rest labeled me "Reactionary." Had I found my own ideas accepted by the democratic parties, I should have found supporters among them also; in which case the "Right"



would perhaps have abused me as a "Democrat," and as a matter of fact this happened often enough.

I am neither a "Reactionary" nor a "Democrat." All I stand for is the prosperity, the cultural progress, and national strength of the German people, authority and order. These are the pillars on which the future of our country rests. During the war this was our aim—to develop the greatest energy in its prosecution and so secure our military existence, and with it our equally important economic existence, both during and after the war.

The inertia of the Imperial Government in so many matters had unpleasant consequences for me, in that ill-wishers, and sometimes even over-zealous friends, dragged me into the strife of parties, although I was in no way concerned and never put myself forward in any way. What I did was misrepresented and criticized without reference to circumstances. My actions and statements were misinterpreted. Vague and totally unfounded assertions were spread broadcast. At first, my frank and soldierly way of thinking prompted me to dismiss all this with a shrug of the shoulders; it was not worth notice in view of the great work in which I was engaged. Later on I regretted these occurrences, but was unable to do anything to prevent them. I repeatedly asked the press to leave me alone. Beyond that, I was too busy to take any action myself. Besides, I had no platform from which to speak, and, above all, I gave the German nation credit for more sense of the stern reality of affairs. But it suited the authorities to have discovered a lightning-conductor. Instead of protecting me they gave free rein to the agitators, represented me as a dictator, put everything down to General Headquarters, and thus embittered the feeling against me. That was the position, broadly speaking. The two Chancellors, Doctor Michaelis and

Count von Hertling, were far above any such intrigues, but the irreparable mischief—in view of my military position, it was nothing short of a national disaster—was already done.

It became more and more the fashion to hold General Headquarters—which in this case meant myself—responsible for our troubles and miseries. For example, my name was associated, not only with the unavoidable hardships, but even with some of the abominations of the home-rationing system. Indeed, I was represented as their author and blamed accordingly. Neither the Quartermaster-General nor the Intendant-General, nor I, had anything to do with the food-supply at home, which was entirely in the hands of the War Ministry and the Food Control Office.

After my resignation I heard from leaders of the Social Democratic party that I had been responsible for the manner in which the military governors had administered the regulations dealing with the right of public meeting. This was entirely outside my province.

The following case is typical. In the winter of 1916-17 I was blamed for the shortage of transport and coal. This was mainly due to insufficient provision having been made before I was appointed to General Headquarters. In February 1917 I urged the appointment of a Coal-Controller. Unfortunately the right man was not discovered at once, and another had to be selected later on. In the summer of 1917 fifty thousand miners were released by General Headquarters from service at the front. In the winter of 1917-18 house-fuel was more plentiful than in the previous one; but General Headquarters, which had taken decisive measures and was certainly more responsible for the improved situation than for the bad conditions of 1916-17, got neither thanks nor credit. That did not

fit in with the ideas of those who were agitating against me, or of those others who, though better informed themselves, allowed the agitation to go on.

The enormous responsibility I had to bear made me long for the conclusion of hostilities; how could it have been otherwise? I often expressed myself in that sense. But unless we got a peace which safeguarded the existence of our country, the war would be lost. I could not see how peace was possible unless the enemy also was ready for it. I thought it very dangerous for us to be alone in announcing a desire for peace.

I was fully aware that nations do not get peace merely by talking about it, or even heartily longing for it. The pacifist idea of a peace by understanding was considered by many to be a weapon against us. Many others sincerely believed in it, being moved by that spirit of exalted idealism which has not yet been realized in this world of strife. But did these idealists know whether the enemy thought as they did, and if he did not, was it not clear that by spreading the notion that they could obtain such a peace at any time, they were leading the way to irreparable disaster, because since human nature is made that way they were inevitably weakening our war spirit, which should at all costs have been strengthened? They made our people yearn for peace, without making the enemy ready for it. In fact, they made peace more difficult of attainment, as the Entente knew all about the state of feeling in our country, and used it for its own purposes. These idealists also impeded the efforts of General Headquarters to make the enemy more inclined for peace by those means which alone lead to success in war. In spite of all their idealism, they are responsible for the misfortune of our country.

I know of no time when the attitude of the enemy justified our hope for a fair and just peace of under-

standing. Everything that has been said or written on this subject is wide of the mark. The Government never indicated to General Headquarters a possible opening for such a peace.

No doubt we could at any moment have had such a peace as has now been forced upon us. What Chancellor, what statesman, what man with true German feeling in his blood would have even thought of it? But every one might have known perfectly well that no other peace was to be had, and so there was nothing for it but to fight for victory, once the war had started.

Toward the end Count Czernin evidently thought as I did, although he, too, would not admit the truth. In his speech of December 11, 1918, he said:

"The best we could hope for was to take advantage of a favorable military situation, such as might still be expected, to propose a peace which, while involving considerable sacrifices, would have perhaps had a chance of being accepted by the enemy. But the more brilliant their successes the more exacting did the German military leaders become, and after their great victories it was less possible than ever to persuade them to such a policy of renunciation.

"I believe that there actually was one, and only one, moment in the course of this war when such an attempt really seemed very likely to succeed, and that was after the famous battle of Gorlice."

The battle of Gorlice was fought in May 1915. Subsequently, therefore—according to Count Czernin—there was no chance of peace at all, even at the cost of considerable sacrifices. And even if there had been a chance, either in May 1915 or later, not only the German military party, but almost the whole German people would have refused it so long as they felt proudly confident of their strength. This confidence and strength should have been fostered by the statesmen,

to keep the will to victory alive in the country, and preserve it from the immeasurable disaster of defeat. The determination of our enemies being what it was, there could be no middle course. Our will in the matter was of no account. That of the enemy was not yet broken. When this had been effected by military victory the diplomats might talk about reconciliation—if they still wanted to.

## IV

For four years the Field-Marshal and I worked together like one man, in the most perfect harmony. With the most profound satisfaction I saw him become the German national hero of this war, the very personification of victory for every German.

The Field-Marshal permitted me to participate in his glory. At the celebration of his seventieth birthday, on October 2, 1917, he expressed this sentiment in particularly touching words.

The Commander-in-chief bears the final responsibility. He bears it before the world, and, what is harder, before himself, his own army, and his own country. As Chief of Staff and First Quartermaster-General I shared his responsibility to the fullest extent, and have always been fully conscious of the fact. I am ready to answer for my actions at any time.

Our strategical and tactical views were in complete agreement, and harmonious and confident co-operation was the natural result. After discussion with my assistants I used to lay my ideas for the initiation and conduct of all operations briefly and concisely before the Field-Marshal. I have the satisfaction of knowing that from Tannenberg to my resignation in October 1918 he always agreed with my views and approved my draft orders.

Our conception of the character of this War of Nations and the necessary measures it involved were also identical, and so were our views on the peace question. Like me, he strove to secure the life of the German people against fresh aggression. He put the whole weight of his personality behind these views.

Those to whom the authority of General Headquarters was, or might be, an obstacle in the attainment of their own selfish ends sought to drive a wedge between the Field-Marshal and myself. They dared not attack him, so they thought it politic to strike at me. They invented differences between his views and actions and mine. According to them, he personified the good principle, I the evil one. Those who spread such notions should at least have made him jointly responsible for all the alleged mischief. Otherwise they undermine his position and obviously present him as a man who could not possibly possess all the great qualities they ascribe to him, qualities he does most certainly possess.

The reputation of the Field-Marshal stands secure enough in the hearts of the German people.

I have always held him in honor and served him faithfully, and I esteem his noble qualities of mind not less highly than his devotion to his king and his readiness to assume responsibility.

## V

Mine has been a life of work for our country, the Emperor, and the army. During the four years of war I lived only for the war.

My days followed a regular plan. All the time I was Chief of the Staff in the East and had direct control of troops, everything was determined by the requirements of the military situation. I was in the office from six or seven in the morning until late at night.

When I was First Quartermaster-General I used to start work when the front was quiet—about eight o'clock. The Field-Marshal arrived perhaps an hour later, and we would briefly discuss military events and plans and any pending questions.

At twelve noon we made our report to His Majesty the Emperor.

At one sharp we went to luncheon, which lasted half or three-quarters of an hour. Before half past three I was again in the office. At eight we had dinner, and after an interval of an hour and a half we resumed work until twelve or one at night.

This monotony was but seldom interrupted. Even during my four or five days' war leave I was not altogether free of duty.

I was in telephonic and telegraphic communication with all parts of the front and with the General Headquarters of our allies. The armies sent in regular morning and evening reports, but continuous reports were furnished when anything unusual occurred.

The Chief of Field Telegraphs in the East, Colonel Lehmann, and later the Chief of Field Telegraphs for the whole army, Major-General Hesse, rendered me comprehensive and effective assistance. The telephone formations belonging to the staff of the Commander-in-chief in the East, and the Field Telegraph Service of General Headquarters, which were responsible for the details of intercommunication, worked extraordinarily well.

On the one hand it was necessary to obtain a clear idea of all events that took place on any part of the enormously extended fronts, but on the other hand it was uncommonly difficult to feel the pulse of the fighting immediately. But it was absolutely essential that General Headquarters should be informed of all important events at once, as only too often the shortage

of reserves obliged us to make immediate decisions of the very greatest importance.

The work of commanding the troops, looking after the welfare of the army, and maintaining fighting efficiency at home, took precedence of everything else. Questions of future military and political policy were regarded as secondary.

The working hours were absorbed by my own work, reports by my subordinate directors and heads of departments and services, and discussions.

I have the pleasantest memories of our work and social life together, both on my staff in the East and at General Headquarters.

The enormous amount of work, together with the heavy responsibility which devolved upon me made it imperative for me to surround myself with independent, upright men, on whom I could call to express their opinions freely and frankly. They certainly did so—very emphatically, too, on occasions. Our co-operation was based upon mutual confidence, and my collaborators ever stood faithfully and firmly by me. They were my active and devoted assistants, imbued with the highest sense of duty. The final decision, of course, rested with me, for responsibility permitted of no hesitation. War demanded rapid action. But decision did not mean despotism, and when I did disagree with the proposals of my assistants I never hurt their feelings. In such cases, and when divergent views had to be reconciled, I endeavored, without being vague, to recognize the justification for different opinions. The fame and great reputations of my associates have always been a matter for sincere satisfaction to me. I always was, and am still, of the opinion that this war was so tremendous and made such great demands that one man alone could not possibly cope with it. It gave plenty of opportunity for brilliant work.



My chief assistant in the East was Lieutenant-Colonel, now Major-General, Hoffmann, an intellectual and progressive officer. My opinion of him as a soldier is best shown by the fact that I suggested him as my successor when I was appointed to General Headquarters at the end of August 1916. In that position he justified his selection as brilliantly as he had when acting as my senior staff-officer.

At General Headquarters I selected Lieutenant-Colonel Wetzell to supervise operations. I had met him previously and knew his value. He was familiar with the Western front, where he had distinguished himself as senior staff-officer and Chief of the General Staff of the 3d Corps, and had done particularly well before Verdun. He has a splendid soldierly spirit and a strong and faithful character. With his enterprising and fertile mind and the care he put into his work, he proved an excellent and valued assistant. In September 1918 I found it necessary to redistribute the staff in order to allow myself a little more leisure; for this reason, and no other, Lieutenant-Colonel Wetzell had to leave me. We separated with the highest regard on both sides.

He was succeeded by Colonel Heye and Major von Stülpnagel. The latter had served on my staff in Berlin for a long time. They were both strong-minded and clear-headed soldiers. With them I passed through the hardest time a soldier can experience; it was the period when it became clear that we could no longer win the war in a military sense. To have to leave them just then was the greatest trial I had to bear.

Questions of organization were dealt with chiefly by Majors von Volland-Bockelberg, Freiherr von dem Bussche and Frahnert, both of them men with enormous enthusiasm, foresight, and capacity for work. Their work was of a high order.

Three of my assistants came prominently before the public. This was due to the nature of their work.

Colonel Bauer, a man of remarkable personality, shared my view that the foundations of ultimate success were to be sought in the war efficiency of the people at home, and did all he could to foster and increase it. He played a decisive part in developing the artillery. It was his duty to submit demands for war material to the home authorities, and to obtain, with the assistance of employers and workmen, a clear idea of the capability of our industries. His work was closely related to that of the War Ministry.

His co-operation and advice were also of the greatest value in matters of military economy and tactics.

The head of the Political Department was General von Bartenwerffer, a calm and clear-headed officer, imbued with fervid patriotism. One important duty of the General Staff in the field was to keep an eye on the military policy of neutrals and enemies, and refer all political questions to which it gave rise to the Imperial Chancellor; it also dealt with political events in the occupied territories, in so far as they were administered by General Headquarters. The frontiers which we might acquire by the war were a matter of the greatest concern to the future security of the country, and all questions connected with them formed an important part of the work of General Headquarters. All correspondence relating to peace questions was conducted by the Political Department.

The third was Lieutenant-Colonel Nicolai, a man of unfailing industry and devotion to duty, and gifted with organizing talent. His duties were multifarious, perhaps too much so. He was responsible for the military direction of the press, and the cognate duty of watching and fostering the morale of the army and the people at home, so far as this could be done by

military authority. In both these functions collaboration with the Government authorities was essential. We were unsuccessful. And so, as we knew only too well, the direction of the press and the enlightenment of the public remained mere patchwork. The military censorship of the press was another of the functions of Lieutenant-Colonel Nicolai and his subordinates. This is one of the necessary evils of war, and from its very nature satisfies nobody. I was very sorry that General Headquarters had to undertake this duty, but all other authorities refused to have anything to do with it.

The other great branch of Lieutenant-Colonel Nicolai's work consisted of the Secret Intelligence Service, prevention of spying, supervision of post, telegraph, and telephone services, and the adoption of measures against industrial spying and sabotage. Lieutenant-Colonel Nicolai's Intelligence Service was of the greatest value to the supreme command. Uncertainty is of the very nature of war. Even the enemy, in spite of his far more extensive agencies, never knew our intentions. We always surprised him, except on July 15, 1918—an occasion when we made things too easy for him.

Major von Rauch, an experienced and careful staff-officer, was at the head of the "Foreign Armies" section, whose duty it was to collect information about the enemy and make it available for the framing of our plans. He proved himself equal to his responsible task. In this direction also the General Staff did all that could reasonably be expected of it.

On my staff there were many other faithful assistants, and I must more particularly specify Colonels von Tieschowitz and von Mertz, Majors von Waldow, Crantz, von Harbou, Hofmann, Bartenwerffer, Muths, Captains Wever, Gabriel, Geyer, von Fischer-Treuenfeld, von Goszler, von Posek. There were many others. We all met together for meals, which were marked

by peculiarly intimate and pleasant intercourse. The Field-Marshal was fond of amusing stories and lively conversation. I used to join in, but liked to discuss service matters also. Of course we took the greatest care not to mention anything connected with operations.

We often had visitors, either at meals or only in the office. Sometimes guests appeared during very critical times. I remember in October 1914 some gentlemen arrived at Radom with a train-load of gifts for the troops, and talked about the prospective capture of Warsaw, while at that very moment I was already contemplating retreat. On such occasions guests rather got on our nerves, but, generally speaking, they cheered us up.

From officers of all branches and belonging to all the divisions on the front we heard how things were going in the army, sometimes with clearer understanding than from long official reports. I attached the greatest importance to our keeping in close touch with the front, and received many hints which I always followed up. I was particularly fond of these military visits and greatly valued them.

Often we had members of the Government from Berlin and the states of the Empire. The Imperial Chancellor, Von Bethmann-Hollweg, paid us a visit at Posen in the autumn of 1914, and again in February 1915 at Lötzen. The other Chancellors also came to see us often. Sometimes we had visits from members of the Reichstag. I always had the impression that these gentlemen enjoyed being with us, whatever party they belonged to. Toward them and other private individuals I naturally observed the necessary discretion in speaking of the military situation and of my ideas on the subject of peace.

Representatives of industry, commerce, and the

Employers' and Workmen's Unions, came occasionally and sat at our table.

Neutral military attachés and military missions were visiting the front; German and foreign reporters, representatives of the press, scientists, and artists, all visited us at various times.

At the table of the Commander-in-chief in the East representatives from all parts of East and West Prussia were particularly frequent visitors.

Many princes were our guests at various times.

A visit from His Majesty the Emperor was, of course, a special honor. Even then conversation was unrestrained, and we felt that His Majesty liked to be with us.

I was particularly pleased to have guests at meals, because it gave me an opportunity of bringing up various questions that required discussion. In this way I saved time later for other military duties.

## VI

Strength of will and foresight are needed for the command of armies; but an intimate knowledge of the composition and organization of the mighty instrument is also necessary, and this can be acquired and maintained only by unremitting work. There is yet another requirement—an understanding of the morale of one's own troops and of the peculiarities of the enemy. That cannot be acquired by work; it is, like so many other things, a matter of personality. The greater the task the more important do these moral factors become. Confidence and faith in ultimate victory are the bonds which unite the commander and his troops.

The group and army commands displayed initiative and understanding in assisting us in our extremely

arduous task. We always maintained a constant interchange of views with them, although the final decision rested with us. General Headquarters had, further, to smooth out difficulties and to preserve a certain unity of view on the many matters which make up the life of an army. The frequent transfer of troops made this particularly important.

Subject to these necessary limitations, each command was independent within its own sphere. This was more the case during the war of movement or attack than in stationary warfare and defense. Tactical situations did, of course, arise in which the views of the commands did not agree in matters of detail with those of General Headquarters. The local command was in such cases often allowed to decide the question. For me this always involved a mental struggle; if they were successful I was pleased, but if they were not I felt it was my fault.

I attached the greatest importance to verbal discussion and gathering direct impressions on the spot. I used to like going to the front, and as First Quarter-master-General always had a special train with separate office and telegraph coaches. Work did not cease during the journey. At prearranged stations the daily reports were handed in as they were at General Headquarters, and if necessary we could communicate with anywhere and everywhere.

My personal relations with both staffs and troops were harmonious. I enjoyed much confidence.

Among my happiest recollections are my relations with the headquarters of the German Crown Prince. He showed a great aptitude for the profession of arms, and asked clever and very informed questions. He was fond of the men and did all he could for them. He was not in favor of the war, but advocated peace. This is the truth, whatever others may say to the con-

trary. The Crown Prince always regretted that he had been insufficiently prepared for his future office as Emperor, and took all possible pains to make good this deficiency. He once told me that he was worse off than a clerk in that respect. He drew up a memorandum on the subject, which he handed to his Imperial father and the Imperial Chancellor.

The Crown Prince was the victim of the false impression he produced; there was more in him than appeared on the surface.

The Chief of the Staff of the German Crown Prince's army group, Colonel Count von der Schulenburg, a very clear-headed and energetic officer, always gave me sound and reliable support.

I often visited the army group of Crown-Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria, also. His alert and uncommonly industrious Chief of Staff, General von Kuhl, was an acquaintance of long standing; I had more than one opportunity of admiring his calm self-possession, even in very serious situations.

It would take too long to mention by name the other groups and armies. But I cannot omit a reference to General von Loszberg. This eminent officer and tactician often rendered the greatest assistance to the army and his country. His confidence in me afforded me special satisfaction.

During my visits to the front the various chiefs of staff explained the situation to me, in the presence of their army commanders. They always spoke as freely as if they had been officers at General Headquarters. They knew I wanted to hear their real views and have a clear idea of the true situation, not a favorable report made to order. Sometimes the armies were instructed only to report bare facts, whether favorable or unfavorable.

After the general statement we would discuss mat-

ters and the army commanders would join in, unless they had explained matters themselves, a thing for which I was always particularly grateful. As a rule I used to extend my visit, and this enabled me to discuss every kind of question with the army commanders.

My intercourse with the armies was not limited to the weekly journeys. Every morning I spoke on the telephone with the chiefs of staff of the armies, and was admitted to their apprehensions and their hopes. They often had requests to submit, and they knew that I would help them if I could. I have often had to give them encouragement, but I always felt that they went back to their heavy task with all the more confidence. At times one got a better and fairer general impression of the strategical and tactical situation from the office chair than one could on the spot where personal impressions had so much greater influence.

My conversations on the telephone were for the purpose of collecting information. Only in cases of emergency did I issue orders on these occasions, and then they were always confirmed in writing to the headquarters concerned.

It was an understood thing that these conversations were reported to the army commanders. I strongly objected to a "Staff Officers' Command"—besides, the army commanders themselves were men of far too independent character to tolerate such a situation.

I did hear of cases where orders were given on the authority of General Headquarters which I would never have approved of; whenever it occurred I took strong measures.

When I was unable to see for myself, General Headquarters despatched officers of the General Staff to collect reports from the front, or from army headquarters, so that we might obtain as clear a picture as possible of the situation on the spot.



Changes in the personnel of the higher commands were unavoidable. They were submitted by the army commands to the Chief of the Military Cabinet, in the case of the General Staff to the Chief of the General Staff. On occasions General Headquarters suggested changes.

This had to be done when it became necessary to have specially experienced officers at the most critical points. It was beneficial to the operations, and particularly to the troops, as it saved many lives.

Exchanges between army and other superior commanders also took place during particularly prolonged periods of fighting, more especially if things were going against us. Such periods imposed a terrible nervous strain upon them. Worn-out corps headquarters were replaced by others. The change was awkward, but its drawbacks were not insuperable. Complete army headquarters could not be relieved, as this would have caused too much dislocation in every direction, especially in the work of supply. The only remedy was to relieve individuals. The difficulties involved were the lesser evil of the two.

Occasionally, at the suggestion of General Headquarters, army commanders and their chiefs of staff were relieved when we could be reasonably certain that neither the command nor the troops would suffer from the change. In a war of this duration a certain loss of energy in individual cases was inevitable. To our great satisfaction, however, such cases were a rarity. It is always a most difficult task to deal with them, and, however conscientious one wishes to be, it is impossible to perform it at all without inflicting hardship, and even an injustice, at times. As far as possible I accepted any counter-suggestions put forward, but if our cause suffered thereby I incurred blame of which no one could relieve me.

Deeply moved by the events of August 8, 1918, I placed my post at the disposal of the Field-Marshal. There is no question that the terrible disappointments toward the end of the war had worn me out, but my nerves never gave way under the strain.

## LIÈGE

Work on the General Staff in Peace-time—In Command of a Regiment and a Brigade—Deputy Chief of the General Staff, Second Army—The Battle of Liège—The Capture of the Forts.

### I

THE favorite recollection of my life as a soldier is the *coup de main* on the fortress. It was a bold stroke, in which I was able to fight just like any soldier of the rank and file who proves his worth in battle.

At the outbreak of war I was brigade commander at Strasburg. For a long time I had been on the General Staff, and latterly, from March 1904 to January 1913, with only one short interval, in the Operations Department, of which I was then chief. There I gained an insight into our preparations for war and the relative strength of the opposing forces. My principal work was strategic plans, the directions for which were given by the Chief of the Staff himself.

The plan of campaign which was inaugurated in August 1914 was conceived by General Count von Schlieffen, one of the greatest soldiers who ever lived. It was planned by him, in the event of France not respecting Belgium's neutrality, or of Belgium joining France. On this assumption the advance of the German main forces through Belgium followed as a matter of course. Any other plan of campaign would have been crippled, owing to the danger from Belgium to the German right flank, and would have precluded a quick and decisive blow at France, which was essen-

tial in order to meet in time the great danger of a Russian invasion into the heart of Germany. In the assumed military situation, as countless war-games had abundantly demonstrated, an offensive against Russia, with simultaneous defensive operations in the West, implied, as a matter of course, a long war, and was, therefore, rejected by Count von Schlieffen.

When there was no longer any doubt as to the attitude of France and Belgium, Count von Schlieffen's scheme was carried into execution.

As to how far General von Moltke conferred with Imperial Chancellor von Bethmann on the question of a march through Belgium I do not know. In any case, no such negotiations were ever conducted through my department, as it was not a matter with which it was concerned. Whether the question had been delegated to the General Staff is also unknown to me. We were all convinced of the soundness of this plan. Nobody believed in Belgium's neutrality.

In our unfavorable military-political position, in the center of Europe, surrounded by enemies, we had to reckon with foes greatly superior in numbers, and prepare ourselves accordingly, if we did not wish to allow ourselves to be crushed. It was well known how Russia pressed for war and continually increased her army. She was intent on humbling Austria-Hungary once and for all and becoming mistress of the Balkans. In France the thought of revenge had revived with renewed vigor; the old German Reichsland was to become French again. Among many other events in France, the reinstatement of the three years' compulsory service left no doubt of that country's intentions. England contemplated our economic ascendancy, our cheap labor, and our restless industry with distinct uneasiness. Moreover, Germany was the greatest land Power in Europe, and, at the same time, she had

a good fleet in course of expansion. This is what made England fear for her world hegemony. The Anglo-Saxon felt his ancient supremacy threatened. The English Government concentrated its fleet, which had had its base of operations until recently in the Mediterranean, in the North Sea, and English Channel. Lloyd George's menacing speech on July 21, 1911, threw a vivid and sudden light on England's intentions which had hitherto been concealed with great skill. It became increasingly certain that war would be forced upon us and that it would be a struggle the like of which the world had never seen. The fact that in non-military circles the probable strength of the enemy was underestimated constituted a real danger.

At the eleventh hour, in the autumn of 1912, when there was no longer any doubt as to the enemy's intentions, and the army was working with might and main with truly German devotion to duty, I drew up a plan for an important increase in our effectives, which met with approval from both the more discerning sections of the public and the more far-sighted among our parliamentary parties. I was able to induce General von Moltke to approach the Imperial Chancellor with the plan, who must himself have considered the situation exceedingly serious, for he immediately agreed to it. He instructed the Minister of War to prepare a bill, without, however, carrying on at the same time any clearly defined and systematic political campaign calculated to gage correctly the attitude of the various Powers. This should have occurred to him as a necessary conclusion. Considering the purposes for which it was conceived, this army estimate for a milliard marks was not of an aggressive character. It merely aimed at adjusting the disproportion in the numerical strength, and had in view the absolute enforcement of universal compulsory

service, for there were still thousands of able-bodied men who did not serve their country. The budget provided for personnel, but more especially for the strengthening of our fortifications and for more material. All this was voted, but what I had most earnestly desired—the addition of three new army corps—was given no consideration; it did not even appear in the estimate. The failure to provide these three additional army corps was paid for dearly later on. At the beginning of the war these additional corps were sorely missed, and the new formations which were added in the autumn of 1914 displayed all the defects of improvisation. Later on, the new formations were made stronger at the start, but the existing corps, on the other hand, were weakened by the contributions they were called upon to make.

However, before the whole bill was passed I was transferred to Düsseldorf, as commanding officer of the 39th Fusileers; I attributed the change partly to my having pressed for those three additional army corps.

## II

Regimental work is full of life and activity. Animated intercourse and constant and close co-operation with and for men who were intrusted to my care, the training of commissioned officers, non-commissioned officers, and men, and the military education of the youth to manhood, particularly attracted me after a long period of staff work. For thirteen years I had had nothing to do with the routine of a regiment. Now my chief work was the inspection of recruits. In the 'eighties of the last century I had on seven different occasions had charge of recruits—with the 57th Infantry Regiment in old Wesel, and with the Marine Infantry in Wilhelmshaven and Kiel. Later on I had done several weeks' service

with the 8th Leib-Grenadier Regiment in Frankfort-on-the-Oder, and from 1898 to 1900 I was in charge of a company of the 61st Infantry Regiment in Thorn—a time I shall never forget. Now that I was in Düsseldorf, I was glad of the experience gained during those years.

I realized all the more the great responsibility which rested on me as commanding officer of the regiment, as I saw the coming war rapidly approaching. In various addresses to my officers I pointed out what extremely serious times we lived in. In the army I saw not only the assurance of Germany's safety and future, but also a guaranty of internal peace. In 1913—thank God!—there was not the least sign that the army would have to be used in this capacity.

Discipline, to which officer and private alike were subjected, was, in my opinion, the only basis on which an army could be effectively trained for war. Such a training could be acquired only through long service. It is only what discipline makes second nature in a man that is lasting and outlives even the demoralizing impressions of the battle-field and the psychological changes wrought by a long campaign. It was our thorough discipline and training in peace-time which was to make up for our inferiority in numbers in the coming war.

My aim was to turn highly disciplined troops into responsible men possessed of initiative. Discipline is not intended to kill character, but to develop it. The purpose of discipline is to bring about uniformity in co-operating for the attainment of a common goal, and this uniformity can be obtained only when each one sets aside the thought of his own personal interests. This common goal is—Victory. Words fail to describe the demands that are made of a soldier in battle. To go "over the top" under enemy fire is, indeed, a

heroic act, but it is by no means the most difficult. How much resolution and readiness to shoulder responsibility is required of a man who either has to lead or send others to certain death. Those are acts the appalling nature of which no one can imagine who has not himself had to perform them.

Besides the care of the men and the education of the non-commissioned officers—an education which was also calculated to assist them in their future callings—I attached the greatest importance to increasing the efficiency of the Officers' Corps and the training of the younger officers. While the personnel of the Regular Officers' Corps is always the same, the officers of the Reserve, the non-coms and men change continually. So the Officers' Corps is the mainspring of the army. The officers must, therefore, be thoroughly conversant with the army's great deeds, and possess a comprehensive knowledge of their country's history, as it is expected of all men who have to lead others. Nothing can be torn from its historical context without serious prejudice. No one should forget that in times of danger the guardianship of the fortunes of the State devolves upon the commissioned officer, supported by the non-commissioned officer. This explains the exclusiveness of the Officers' Corps and its holding aloof from political life.

I aimed at making my officers conversant with the conditions of modern warfare, and endeavored to strengthen in them that self-assurance which is essential to the fulfilment of their difficult task, but must not develop into arrogance.

I zealously devoted myself to the training and education of the regiment, and had afterward the satisfaction of learning that it proved its worth in the face of the enemy. It was a great pleasure to me when, in the course of the war, I was first placed *à la suite* of my regiment, and later appointed its colonel. At



the time of my resignation it was named after me; I am indeed proud of the General Ludendorff Fusileer Regiment.

In April 1914 I went to Strasburg, where General von Deimling's presence insured an active military life for every man in his command. The position as brigade commander was quite different from that of regimental commander in Düsseldorf. I missed the direct intercourse with the troops and the Officers' Corps, and was occupied chiefly with organization. Before the outbreak of war I had the pleasure of parading my brigade for inspection at Bitsch.

There was again a question of my being appointed as Quartermaster-General on the Great General Staff; I was, of course, doing General Staff work. In May I took part in a tour of inspection, which began in Freiburg in Breisgau and ended in Cologne. His Imperial Highness the Crown Prince was with us. He devoted himself with great zeal to his work and showed both sound understanding of military affairs and insight into large-scale operations. In August I had to conduct a so-called "supply tour," in which the strategical plan for the supply of an army was examined.

Austria-Hungary's note to Serbia at the end of July came as a shock to me in Strasburg; nobody could ignore its seriousness. War was soon a certainty. Diplomacy presented the German Army with an extremely difficult task. In great anxiety I followed events in Berlin then, as I still do, feeling that, so far as I was concerned, I was not responsible for whatever happened.

### III

General mobilization was decreed on August 1. My wife went to Berlin immediately, for the families of all officers and officials were ordered to leave Stras-

burg. During the whole four years of war we were unable to set up a home of our own, and I was never able to pay any but short flying visits to my wife. My family had little consideration during these momentous days, for all my time was occupied by my work.

Early on August 2 I traveled, with my horses, *via* Cologne, to Aix-la-Chapelle, which I reached on the same evening. Under mobilization orders I was appointed Quartermaster-General of the Second Army, then commanded by General von Bülow, with General von Lauenstein as his chief of staff.

Next I had to join General von Emmich, who had been given the task of taking the fortress of Liège by surprise, the troops for this purpose being composed of some quickly mobilized mixed infantry brigades which had not been brought up to full strength. By this move it was intended to clear a way through Belgium for the army.

I took up my quarters in Aix-la-Chapelle at the Hotel Union.

On August 3 General von Emmich arrived. I had not previously met this distinguished soldier, but from that time onward I cherished a feeling of deep esteem for him, which lasted until the day of his death. His Chief of Staff was Colonel Count von Lambsdorff, a brilliant officer, who won great distinction at Liège and elsewhere.

On August 4 the advance over the Belgian frontier began, while in Berlin the Reichstag, in a patriotic demonstration, voted its support to the Government; and the party leaders, after the speech from the throne had been read, vociferously proclaimed their unconditional allegiance to the Kaiser, come what might. The same day I had my first experience of fighting in an engagement near Visé, close to the Dutch frontier. It was evident that Belgium had long been prepared

for our advance. The roads had been systematically destroyed and barricaded, showing that a great deal of work had been done beforehand. No such obstacles could be found on the southwest frontier of Belgium. Why had Belgium not taken similar precautions against France?

The question as to whether we could secure the bridges at Visé intact was one of special importance. I went on to visit Von der Marwitz's cavalry, which was then on its way to the town, but was able to advance only slowly, because one barricade after another barred the way. At my request a cyclist company was sent to reconnoiter. After a short while a cyclist returned with the news that the company had entered Visé and had been completely annihilated. I went with two men to see for myself, and to my joy I found the company intact with the exception of the leader, who had been badly wounded by a shot fired from the opposite bank of the Meuse. This little episode was useful to me later on, for it taught me to be more skeptical of such canards, or, as they were subsequently called, *Etappen* rumors.

The beautiful Meuse bridges had been destroyed; Belgium was ready for war.

I was in Hervé the same evening, my first headquarters on enemy soil. We spent the night at an inn opposite the station. The whole town was intact, and we went to bed with a quiet mind. During the night I was awakened by brisk firing, some of which was directed on our house. The *franc-tireur* warfare of Belgium had begun. It broke out everywhere the next day, and it was this sort of thing which aroused that intense bitterness that during those first years characterized the war on the Western front, in contrast to the feeling prevailing in the East. The Belgian Government took a grave responsibility upon itself.

It had systematically organized civilian warfare. The *Garde Civique*, which in the days of peace had its own arms and special uniforms, was able to appear sometimes in one garb and sometimes in another. The Belgian soldiers must also have had a special civilian suit in their knapsacks at the commencement of the war. In the trenches near Fort Barchon, to the north-east of Liège, I myself saw uniforms which had been left behind by soldiers who had fought there.

Such action was not in keeping with the usages of war; our troops cannot be blamed if they took the sternest measures to suppress it. It is true that innocent persons may have had to suffer, but the stories of "Belgian atrocities" are nothing but clever, elaborate, and widely advertised legends, and the Belgian Government can alone be held responsible. For my part, I had taken the field with chivalrous and humane conceptions of warfare. This *franc-tireur* warfare was bound to disgust any soldier; it caused me personally bitter disillusionment.

#### IV

The advance brigades had, indeed, a difficult task to accomplish before Liège. It was certainly an extraordinarily bold plan to penetrate the girdle of forts right into the heart of a modern fortress. The troops felt nervous; from conversations with the officers, I gathered that their faith in the success of this undertaking was only slight.

In the night of August 5 the advance on Liège through its fortifications began. The action in all its details has already been described by the General Staff in a pamphlet published by Stalling of Oldenburg. It is not my intention to go over this ground again, for I wish to set down my personal experiences only.

Toward midnight of the 5th General von Emmich

left Hervé. We rode to Micheroux, about two or three kilometers from Fort Fléron, where the 14th Infantry Brigade, under Major-General von Wussow, was assembling. Under cover of the darkness the troops, taking with them the unfamiliar but invaluable field kitchens, were collecting in a very unsoldierly manner on a road which could easily have been swept by the guns of the fort. As it was, they were shot at from a house to the south of the road. A regular battle ensued, but the fort itself did not open fire, which was a miracle. About one o'clock the advance began. It was to take us north of Fort Fléron *via* Retinne through the line of forts, and then on to the heights of La Charreuse, on the outskirts of the town. We were due there early in the morning. The other brigades which were to break through the girdle of forts at other points were to reach the town at the same hour.

General von Emmich's staff was almost at the end of the column. Suddenly it came to a standstill. I pushed my way to the front. There was no apparent reason for the halt, which proved to have been due to a most regrettable misunderstanding of the situation. I myself was really only a spectator, and had no authority to give orders. I was there only to report on the operations at Liège to my army command, which was to arrive later, and also to co-ordinate General von Emmich's plans with General von Bülow's anticipated scheme. I put the column into motion again and remained at its head. In the mean time we had lost touch with the troops in front. We had considerable trouble in finding our way in the pitch darkness, but at length reached Retinne. We were still out of touch with the others. I started out from the village at the head of the column, and took the wrong road. We were immediately fired at, and men fell right and left. I shall never forget hearing the thud of bullets striking

human bodies. We made a few attacks on the invisible enemy, but the firing became more intense. It was not easy to take our bearings in the dark, but there was no doubt that we had taken the wrong turning. The essential thing was to get out of range, and this was unfortunate, because the men could think only that I was afraid. But there was nothing else to be done—more important things were at stake. I crept back and gave my men the order to follow me to the outskirts of the village.

Once back at Retinne, I found the right road. Here I saw General von Wussow's orderly with his horses. He thought that the general had fallen. With a handful of men I took the right road, a metaled road leading to Queue du Bois. Suddenly there was firing ahead. Machine gun bullets swept the road, but did not harm us. A little farther on we came across a heap of dead and wounded German soldiers, who proved to be some of the advance party with General von Wussow. They must have run into machine gun fire earlier on. I collected some men of the 4th Jäger Battalion and the 27th Infantry Regiment, who were gradually arriving, and decided to take over the command of the brigade. The first thing to be done was to clear the road of the enemy's machine guns. Captains von Harbou and Brinckmann, of the General Staff, pushed their way, with a few brave men, through the hedges and farms on both sides of the road, and fell upon the guns. The strong gun team surrendered and the road was clear.

We continued on our way and soon were engaged in heavy house-to-house fighting in Queue du Bois. Gradually it became light. I went on ahead with a few men, the two staff captains, Major von Marcard, commanding the 4th Rifles, Major von Greiff, commanding the 2d Detachment of the 4th Field Regiment, and his

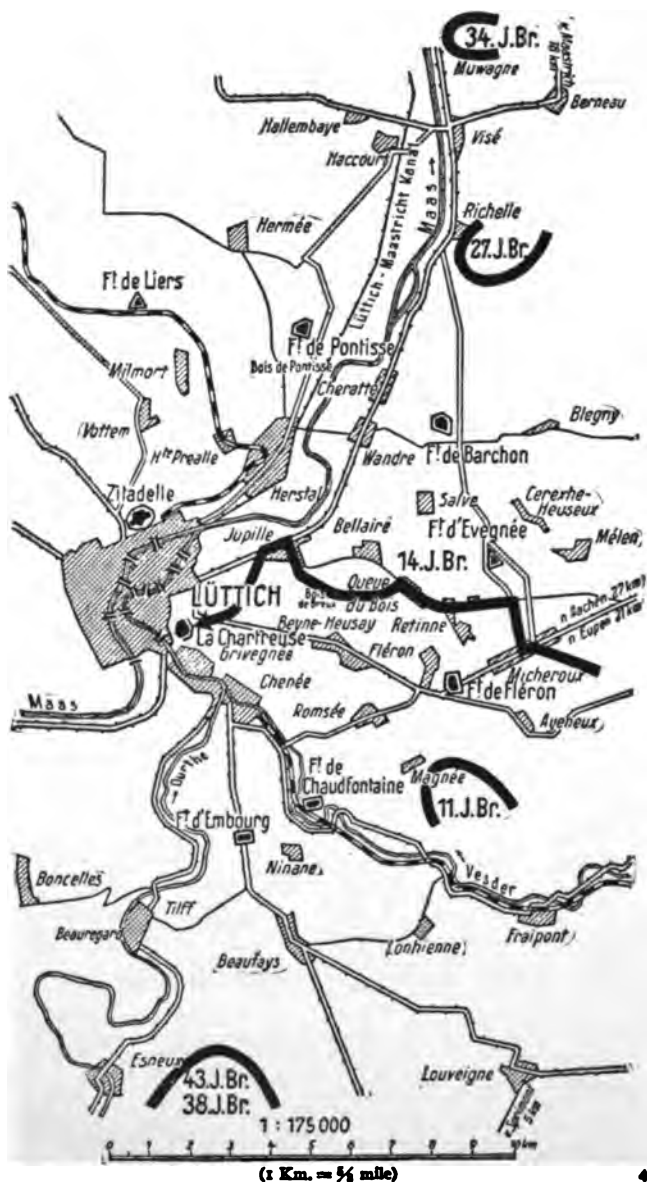


FIG. 1. LIÈGE. SITUATION ON THE EVENING OF AUGUST 6, 1914

excellent adjutant, Lieutenant Neide. A field howitzer was brought up; then a second. They fired right and left into the houses and so cleared the streets. Little by little we advanced. The men were reluctant to proceed, and I was often compelled to exhort them not to leave me and thus compel me to go on alone. At last the village lay behind us. The inhabitants had fled, and it was now a question of fighting the regular Belgian Army.

As we came out of the village we could distinguish a column marching along the Meuse in the direction of Liège. I hoped it was the 27th Infantry Brigade, but it turned out to be Belgians, who, rather than face us, were retreating over the Meuse in a panic. It was a long time before the situation was clear, and in the mean while my forces were strengthened by the arrival of the men who had been left behind.

We had successfully broken through the girdle of forts. The 165th Infantry Regiment, under its distinguished commanding officer, the then Colonel von Oven, pushed on in close formation; General von Emmich arrived, and the advance on La Chartreuse was continued.

General von Emmich placed at my disposal parts of the 11th Infantry Brigade, who were farther south, in the belief that they also had broken through. Our advance continued without incident.

We could see the works on the north side of Liège as we climbed out of the Meuse Valley to the heights east of La Chartreuse. It was about two o'clock when the brigade arrived there. Guns were at once trained on the town, and a shot was fired now and then, partly as a signal to the other brigades, partly to intimidate the governor of the fortress and the inhabitants. But I had to be exceedingly sparing of the ammunition, for we were very short. The troops were



exhausted and much weakened by the hard fighting; officers had lost their horses, and the field kitchens had been left behind. I rested the brigade and provided for it as best I could by commandeering supplies from the neighboring houses. General von Emmich soon rejoined us.

From the heights of La Chartreuse we had a fine view of the town lying at our feet. The citadel on the far bank of the Meuse stood out prominently. Suddenly white flags fluttered from it. General von Emmich wanted to send an officer with a flag of truce. I proposed waiting for the enemy's envoy, but the General adhered to his decision, and Captain von Harbou rode into the town. He returned at 7 P.M. and reported that the white flag had been flown against the Governor's will. It was then too late to march into the town. We had a heavy night ahead of us. Meanwhile I had let the brigade take up a position. Our situation was exceedingly serious. No news reached us from the other brigades, not even from the 11th, and no despatch-riders got through. It became increasingly clear that the brigade was isolated within the circle of forts, cut off from the outer world. We had to reckon with hostile attacks. The thousand-odd Belgian prisoners we had with us increased our difficulties. When we found out that the whole work of La Chartreuse, just below us, was unoccupied, I sent a company there with these prisoners. The company commander must have doubted my sanity.

As darkness fell, the nervousness of the troops increased. I went up and down the front, exhorting them to keep steady and hold fast. The battle-cry, "We shall be in Liège to-morrow," restored their spirits.

General von Emmich and his staff found quarters in a little farm-house.

I shall never forget the night of August 6. It was

cold, and as I had left my kit behind, Major von Marcard gave me his cloak. I was very anxious and listened feverishly for the sound of fighting. I still hoped that at least one brigade had broken through the girdle of forts. But all was quiet, though every half-hour or so a howitzer shell fell into the town. The suspense was unbearable. About 10 P.M. I ordered Captain Ott, with a Jäger company, to seize the bridges over the Meuse, in order to make them available for our farther advance, and also insure the safety of the brigade later on. The captain looked at me—and went. The company reached its objective without any fighting, but no reports came back.

Morning broke. I went to General von Emmich, and discussed the situation with him. We adhered here to our decision to enter the town, but the General would not at that moment fix the time. His order to me to enter the town reached me soon after, while I was doing something to improve the position of the brigade and trying to reach the road by which the 11th Brigade was to advance. Colonel von Oven was in charge of the advance-guard; the rest of the brigade, with the prisoners, followed at a certain distance, headed by General von Emmich with his staff and myself with the brigade staff. As we entered, many Belgian soldiers who were standing about surrendered. Colonel von Oven was to occupy the citadel. As a result of the reports he received, he decided not to do this, but to take the road toward Fort Loncin, on the northwest side of the town, and take up a position at that exit from Liège. Thinking that Colonel von Oven was in possession of the citadel, I went there with the brigade adjutant in a Belgian car which I had commandeered. When I arrived no German soldier was to be seen and the citadel was still in the hands of the enemy. I banged on the gates, which were

locked. They were opened from inside. The few hundred Belgians who were there surrendered at my summons.

The brigade now came up and took possession of the citadel, which I immediately put in a state of defense.

My self-imposed task was now at an end, and I could ask General von Emmich to release me. I intended to leave the fortress by the way I had come, as I wanted to report what had happened to Army Headquarters, ascertain the whereabouts of the other brigades, and give directions for the bringing up of the artillery against the forts. While I was still in the citadel, several hundred German soldiers turned up who had been taken prisoners and were afterward released. The leading units of the 34th Infantry Brigade had broken through to the west bank of the Meuse. The action had then been broken off, so that the successful detachment had been taken prisoner. This brigade now arrived, and subsequently the 11th and 27th, so that when I left General von Emmich he had quite a respectable force at his disposal. On the other hand, news reached us that the French were approaching from Namur, so the situation was still extremely serious. In fact, it could be regarded as saved only when some of the eastern forts had fallen.

## V

My leave-taking from General von Emmich moved me deeply. I started at seven o'clock for Aix-la-Chapelle and had a somewhat peculiar journey. A man of the *Garde Civique* offered to take me there. He selected a car, but I declined it. The car I ultimately took broke down before we were out of the citadel, and so I had no choice but to trust myself blindly to the Belgian soldier. For a time all went well. We passed

through Hervé, where I found that my former headquarters and the station had been burnt down. On reaching German territory, the driver stopped suddenly and told me he could not go any farther. Availing myself of various modes of conveyance, I reached Aix-la-Chapelle late at night with my Belgian soldier. At the Hotel Union I was greeted as one risen from the dead. My orderly, Rudolph Peters, who served me faithfully for six long years, was still there with my baggage. His greatest ambition was to get the Iron Cross, but as this would have been contrary to my views on the subject, it was not given him. I had a hasty meal in Aix-la-Chapelle, and then started off during the night on my search for the brigades. I had not had my clothes off for nearly ninety hours. By chance I came across my old regiment, which had been hurriedly railed up to help at Liège. I understood that General Headquarters in Berlin had been entertaining the gravest fears for our safety.

The situation of the troops in the citadel was certainly critical, and I was very anxious about them, but the tension relaxed as the enemy remained inactive.

The chronicle of the subsequent events at Liège is the province of official history. I may mention, however, that I happened to assist at the capture of Fort Pontisse, on the north front, and arrived at Fort Loncin just as it fell. It had been hit by a shell from one of our 42-cm. howitzers. The magazine had been blown up and the whole work collapsed. A number of dazed and blackened Belgian soldiers crawled out of the ruins, accompanied by some Germans who had been taken prisoner on the night of August 5. All bleeding, they came toward us with their hands up, stammering out, "*Ne pas tuer, ne pas tuer*" ("Don't kill, don't kill!"). . . . We were no Huns, and our men brought water to refresh our enemies.

We gradually got possession of all the works, just in time to enable the right wing of the German Army to continue its march over the Meuse into Belgium without hindrance. A great load was taken off my mind.

I have always regarded it as a great piece of luck that I was able to be present at the taking of Liège, if only because I had worked on the plan of attack in peacetime, and had always been impressed with the importance of the operation. His Majesty bestowed on me the order *Pour le Mérite* for my leadership of the brigade. Of course General von Emmich received it, too, as general officer in command, for his was the responsibility. Besides, the taking of Liège was not a one-man feat, but the result of the co-operation of a number, and the glory of reducing the fortress must be divided among them.

I took part in the farther advance into Belgium in my capacity as Quartermaster-General, and thus had an opportunity of gaining a thorough insight into all questions affecting the supply of an army, knowledge which made my subsequent position as Chief of Staff much easier. In my journeyings through the country, I came to Andenne, where I saw a gruesome, distressing example of the devastation that follows *franc-tireur* operations.

On August 21 I was present at the crossing of the Sambre, by the 2d Guards Division, west of Namur. The preliminaries of the great collision were carried through with perfect ease. It was wonderful to see the magnificent men of the Augusta Regiment go into battle.

On the morning of August 22 I received my call to the East.

**AS CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF,  
EASTERN FRONT**

*From August 22, 1914, to August 18, 1916*



# TANNENBERG

Summoned to the Eastern Front—The Plan of Battle—The Battle—  
The Concentration Against Rennenkampf—The Battle of the  
Masurian Lakes—The Behavior of the Russian Army—The Swing  
of the Pendulum in the West.

(Maps I, II, and III)

## I

THE letters from General von Moltke and General von Stein summoning me to General Headquarters at Coblenz, and informing me that I had been appointed Chief of Staff to the Eighth Army in East Prussia, were handed to me by Captain von Rochow at 9 P.M. on the morning of August 22, at the Headquarters of the Second Army, half-way between Wavre and Namur.

General von Moltke's letter ran:

You have before you a new and difficult task, perhaps even more difficult than that of storming Liège. . . . I know no other man in whom I have such absolute trust. You may be able to save the situation in the East. You must not be angry with me for calling you away from a post in which you are perhaps on the threshold of a decisive action, which, please God, will be conclusive. This is yet another sacrifice you are called upon to make for the Fatherland. The Kaiser, too, has confidence in you. Of course you will not be made responsible for what has already happened, but with your energy, you can prevent the worst from happening. So answer this new call, which is the greatest compliment that can be paid any soldier. I know that you will not belie the trust reposed in you.

General von Stein, who was at that time Quartermaster-General, and later became Minister of War, concluded his letter by saying:



You must go, therefore. The interests of the State make it imperative. Your task is a difficult one, but you are equal to it.

From Captain von Rochow I learned that General von Hindenburg was to be Commander-in-chief, but that it was not yet known where he was to be found or whether he would accept the post.

I was proud of my new task and of the trust placed in me, as revealed by the two letters. I was exalted at the thought of serving my Emperor, the army, and the Fatherland, and in a position of great responsibility at a most critical juncture. Love of country, loyalty to my sovereign, appreciation of the truth that the duty of every one is to devote his life to his family and the State—these were the inherited principles which accompanied me into the world when I left my parents' roof. My parents were not wealthy; their long and faithful work had brought them no material reward. Our happy and harmonious family life was conducted on very economical and simple lines. Both my father and my mother sacrificed their all in providing for their six children. I take this opportunity of thanking them before the whole world.

I had a hard struggle to make ends meet when I was a young officer, but my enjoyment of life did not suffer on that account. Much of my time was spent in my simple subaltern's apartments in Wesel, Wilhelmshaven, and Kiel, reading works on history, military history, and geography. I extended and developed the knowledge I had acquired as a boy. I learned to be proud of my Fatherland and its great men, and ardently worshiped at the shrine of Bismarck's powerful and passionate genius.

The work of our reigning house for Prussian Germany stood out in the clearest relief. The allegiance I had pledged on oath developed into a feeling of deep personal devotion. As I followed history step by step,

I became more and more convinced that the safety of the country essentially depended on the army and navy, in view of the fact that Germany had again and again been the battle-field of Europe. At the same time, my experience of life enabled me to appreciate and realize all that the Fatherland had done and was doing in times of peace in the cause of culture and humanity.

My practical work for the army began in 1904, when I was appointed to the Operations Department of the Great General Staff. The culmination of my work there was my proposal for the milliard-mark bill.

For a long time my mobilization orders had appointed me Director of Military Operations at General Headquarters; but, of course, this was changed when I took over the command of the regiment in Düsseldorf. My successor on the staff was appointed to that position. I valued my position as Quartermaster-General of the Second Army (to which I was appointed on mobilization) because of Liège, but otherwise it was not particularly attractive.

Under the leadership of General von Moltke, I had taken part in many General Staff tours of inspection, and had there gained deep insight into the art of war on a large scale. My new position offered me an opportunity, though only in a comparatively small field of action, of proving whether I understood how to apply the teachings of that great teacher of the General Staff, General Count von Schlieffen. No soldier could have had a better chance given him. But I was deeply distressed that my appointment was the outcome of such a serious situation for my country. My patriotic feelings and heartfelt convictions spurred me to action.

Within a quarter of an hour I was on my way in a car to Coblenz. I passed through Wavre. Only the day before it had been a peaceful town. Now it was

in flames. Here, also, the populace had fired on our troops. That was my farewell to Belgium.

I arrived at Coblenz at six o'clock in the evening and immediately reported to General von Moltke, who was looking tired. Here I learned further details of the situation in the East. On August 20 the Eighth Army had attacked the Russian Nieman Army, under General Rennenkampf, near Gumbinnen. This offensive had, in spite of initial successes, not resulted in any decisive victory, and had to be broken off. Since then the army between Lake Mauer and the river Pregel was in full retreat westward over the river Angerapp, and to the north of the Pregel, behind the river Deime, the first line of defense of the fortress of Königsberg. The 1st Army Corps was to be brought by rail from stations west of Insterburg to Gosslershausen, and be placed at the disposal of the army command, while the 3d Reserve Division was to be taken from Angerberg to the Allenstein-Hohenstein front to reinforce the 20th Army Corps.

The line of lakes from Nikolaiken to Lötzen, which was only slightly fortified, was in our hands; only weak enemy forces had approached it.

General von Scholtz, commanding the 20th Army Corps, was in charge on the southern frontier of East Prussia. In the course of continuous engagements with the Russian Narew Army, under Samsonoff, he had concentrated around and to the east of Gilgenburg, his own divisions, the 70th Landwehr Brigade (which was still under his command) and part of the garrisons of Thorn and the other Vistula fortresses. The enemy was pressing him very heavily.

There was a possibility of the two enemy armies advancing on both sides of the chain of lakes. General von Moltke informed me that the Eighth Army was proposing to evacuate the whole country east of the

Vistula; only the fortresses were to retain their war garrisons and be defended. The Eighth Army had no doubt adopted this plan in the expectation of a speedy decision in the West, when East Prussia could be re-



FIG. 2. TANNENBERG. SITUATION ON AUGUST 22, 1914

conquered with the help of reinforcements from the West, and the invading army driven back. This scheme had often been practised by Count von Schlieffen in strategical maneuvers. If the assumption was correct, the decision of the Eighth Army to spare itself for later operations was sound.

But it did not allow for the realities of war, nor did it take into account the immense responsibility of exposing part of one's country to invasion. The amount of suffering inflicted on countries that form the actual theater of operations, even under the most humane conditions of warfare, has once more been brought home to humanity by this World War.

As events were shaping, retreat behind the Vistula would have spelled ruin. We should not have been able to hold the Vistula line against the numerically superior forces of the Russians, and it would certainly have been impossible for us to support the Austrian Army in September; its collapse would then have followed as a matter of course. The situation, as I found it, was indeed very serious, but, after all, the problem was not insoluble.

At my request, orders were immediately sent to the East front fixing the retreat of the main body of the Eighth Army for August 23. The 1st Reserve Corps, the 17th Army Corps, and the main reserve of the Königsberg garrison were to have a rest. The 1st Army Corps was not to be detrained at Gosslershausen, but near General von Scholtz's position, somewhere east of Deutsch-Eylau. Any available troops from the garrisons of Thorn, Kulm, Grandenz, and Marienburg were to go to Strasburg and Lautenberg. These garrisons were composed only of Landwehr and Landsturm formations. Thus, in the southwest part of East Prussia a strong army was formed, which could undertake an offensive, while the northern group either continued its retreat in a southwesterly direction or could be brought straight down south to assist in the action against the Narew Army. Of course an actual decision as to the plan to be adopted could be given only on the spot. The Russians could not be driven off without a fresh engagement. No staff-officer would

miss such a chance of turning to good advantage the fact that their two armies were separated from each other.

I also reported to His Majesty the Emperor. His Majesty, who was very calm, spoke seriously of the Eastern situation, and deeply regretted that part of the German Fatherland should suffer invasion by the enemy. He was mindful of the sufferings of his people. The Kaiser decorated me with the order *Pour le Méritz*, which had been awarded me for my work at Liège, and spoke appreciatively of me. All my life this occasion will be a proud, if sad, memory.

At nine o'clock in the evening I left Coblenz in a special train for the Eastern front.

Shortly before my departure I learned that General von Hindenburg had accepted the post of Commander-in-chief, and would board the train at Hanover at four o'clock in the morning.

The General was at the station at Hanover, and I reported to him. It was the first time we had met. All other versions belong to the realm of fiction.

I explained the situation shortly, and we then went to bed.

About two o'clock in the afternoon of August 23 we arrived at Marienburg, where the army command awaited us. The situation had changed and the decision to retire behind the Vistula had been abandoned. It was intended to hold the line of the river Passarge. General Grünert, Chief of Staff of the Eighth Army, and Lieutenant-Colonel Hoffmann were responsible for this change of plan.

Our reception at Marienburg was anything but cheerful. It seemed like entering another world to come into this depressing atmosphere after Liège and the rapid advance in the West. But things soon

changed, and the general atmosphere improved. Staff life was once more what I have already described.

## II

Major Valdivia, the distinguished Spanish military attaché during the war, asked me on his first visit to headquarters in Posen in October 1914 whether the battle of Tannenberg had been fought according to a long-conceived and prepared plan. I could only answer that it had not. He was greatly surprised, for, like most other people, he had taken it for granted.

A plan of campaign can and must be planned a long time ahead. Battles in a war of positions demand similar treatment, but the rapid succession of events in a war of movement bring about equally rapid changes in a commander's views and impressions. He has to be guided by feeling, intuition. Thus the military science becomes an art and the soldier a strategist.

Gradually, during the period of August 24-26, the battle plan took shape in all its details. The great question was whether it would really be possible to withdraw the 1st Reserve Corps and the 17th Army Corps from their positions facing Rennenkampf, so as to unite them with other units of the Eighth Army for action against the Narew Army. It depended solely on Rennenkampf himself, for if he knew how to make the most of his success at Gumbinnen, and advance quickly, my plan would be unworkable. Then there would be no alternative but to withdraw the 1st Reserve Corps and the 17th Army Corps in a more southwesterly direction toward Wormditt, while the other part of the Eighth Army held up the Narew Army in the hope, with luck, of defeating it somehow. The idea of a stiff defense of some line east of the Vistula, if necessary, also entered into our calculations.

We discovered by degrees that Rennenkampf was advancing only slowly. The two army corps could therefore be gradually deflected in their retirement through the Bartenstein-Gerdauen line, in a sharp southerly direction to Bischofsburg-Neidenburg.

Next, the 17th Army Corps, protected by the 1st Cavalry Division and the 1st Reserve Corps, was moved south *via* Schippenbeil to Bischofstein. As soon as it had passed behind the 1st Reserve Corps, and on the 26th advanced from Bischofstein to Bischofsburg, the 1st Army Corps itself moved, south of Schippenbeil, in the direction of Seeburg. Only the 1st Cavalry Division remained in contact with Rennenkampf, near Schippenbeil and to the south. From this division, also on the 26th, the 1st Cavalry Brigade received the order to advance *via* Rössel on Sensburg. Accordingly, from August 27 onward, only two cavalry brigades stood between Lake Mauer and the river Pregel, facing twenty-four very strong infantry and several cavalry divisions of Rennenkampf's. The defensive chain of lakes was thus open, on the west; and in any case it would have been quite easy to turn it and completely isolate Königsberg.

Our decision to give battle arose out of the slowness of the Russian leadership and was conditioned by the necessity of winning in spite of inferiority in numbers, yet I found it immensely difficult to take this momentous step.

The corps came up here in the rear of the Narew Army, which was advancing from Neidenburg to Allenstein. In this way they exposed their rear, without adequate protection to Rennenkampf's army, which was only two or three days' march away. When the battle began in real earnest on the 27th and, in contrast to previous wars, was not finished in one day, but continued until the 30th, Rennenkampf's formidable



host hung like a threatening thunder-cloud to the northeast. He need only have closed with us and we should have been beaten. But *Rennenkampf* brought his army forward over the *Allenburg - Gerdauen - Neidenburg* line so slowly that we had time to win a brilliant victory.

Few knew the anxiety with which I watched the *Niemen Army* during those long days.

In order to allow the 17th Army Corps and the 1st Reserve Corps to make their full striking power felt, the other groups of the Eighth Army had of course to attack. And, whatever happened, they had not to let themselves be beaten.

The reinforced 20th Army Corps had passed through difficult and exhausting days. On the 23d it stood, facing south, on the heights northeast of *Gilgenburg*, while the enemy was approaching from *Neidenburg*—that is, from the southeast. The 3d Reserve Division was still assembling. The 1st Army Corps had just begun to detrain near *Deutsch-Eylau*. General von *Scholtz* was successful in beating off superior enemy forces, but while holding the heights east of *Gilgenburg* he was obliged to withdraw his left flank sharply west of *Hohenstein*, about as far as *Mühlen*. Although uncomfortable for the troops, this movement had its good points, for the Russians thought they had won. They did not believe in any further German resistance, still less in a German attack. They saw the road open into German territory east of the *Vistula*.

On the 24th we got into touch with General von *Scholtz* and actually met him at *Tannenberg*. He and his Chief of Staff, Colonel *Hell*, were to distinguish themselves in the course of the war and leave their names to history.

General von *Scholtz* gave us a lucid account of the great achievements of the troops under his command

since the beginning of the campaign, and the great difficulties encountered in the last battles. He was of the opinion that the enemy would attack him again, but that he would be able to stand fast.

On the journey from Marienburg to Tannenberg, an intercepted enemy wireless message was sent us which gave a clear idea of our opponents' dispositions for the next few days. The Narew Army was advancing, its left wing in echelon, its 6th Corps directed *via* Ortelsburg, on Bischofsburg, which was reached or passed by the 26th, and its 13th Corps directed from Neidenburg through Passenheim to Allenstein. The 15th and 18th Corps, with which General von Scholtz had been engaged during these days, was following. On the 26th, the most southerly echelon was to be found somewhere near Waplitz. Still farther back to the left, and pushed west, the 1st Corps, covered by several cavalry divisions, was moving through Mlawka and Soldau, against Lautenberg and Strasburg.

It was a question of breaking up this movement of the enemy by an attack from the west with the southern group of the Eighth Army. It was a great temptation to attack simultaneously south of Soldau, in order to surround the 1st Russian Corps as well. The defeat of the Narew Army, in conjunction with the advance of the 17th Army Corps and the 1st Reserve Corps, could thus have been absolutely annihilating, but the forces at my disposal were insufficient. So I proposed to General von Hindenburg that an attack be made in the direction of Usdau by the 1st Army Corps on the line Deutsch-Eylau-Montowo, and by the right wing of the reinforced 20th Army Corps from the direction of Gilgenburg, so as to throw back the Russian 1st Corps to the south, beyond Soldau. Then, our 1st Army Corps was to break through in the direction of Neidenburg, in conjunction with the 1st and 17th

Army Corps and 1st Reserve Corps, in order to surround at least the main body of the Narew Army. We had to confine ourselves to this plan if we wished to succeed.

The attack by the 1st and 20th Army Corps had to be postponed to the 27th, though I should have been glad to see it begin earlier; but the 1st Army Corps was not yet ready, the condition of the railways in East Prussia being far from good. General von François, commanding the 1st Army Corps, quite rightly insisted on concentrating the whole of his corps before attacking.

But matters did not develop as smoothly as would appear from this short sketch. All the troops were exceedingly exhausted, and their vitality had been reduced by continual fighting. Many difficulties were met with in the transmission of orders to the 1st Reserve Corps and the 17th Army Corps. Enemy cavalry patrols rendered that zone unsafe. It was doubtful whether the enemy would give us time to carry out our plans.

But the greatest difficulties were due to the refugees, numbering many thousands, some on foot and some in vehicles, who blocked the roads behind Von Scholtz's force. They hung on to the troops, and a sudden retreat on the part of this army group would have had the most distressing consequences, both for refugees and for soldiers. But it could not be avoided, for the few police were not sufficient to take charge of such masses. We had to put up with them. The memory of the many sad sights I then saw haunts me still.

### III

On August 24 and 25 our headquarters were at Rosenberg, and on the 26th at Löbau. We took advantage of

these last two days to get into touch with commanders and men in various parts.

On the evening of the 26th the positions of both sides were somewhat as follows:

General von Mühlmann—who had the 1st Army Corps under his orders, with portions of the garrisons of the Vistula fortresses—was in Lautenberg and Strasburg, in close touch with enemy cavalry. The 1st Army Corps had been concentrated at the south of Montowo, and had fought its way as far as Usdau, which was strongly held by the Russian 1st Corps. General von François was ready to continue his advance on the 27th.

To the right wing of the reinforced 20th Army Corps had been allotted the task of attacking Usdau from the north, and then joining hands with the 1st Army Corps in its later advance upon Neidenburg. The 41st Infantry Division was to march upon Waplitz from Gross Gardienen, while on their left a Landwehr Brigade, the 3d Reserve Division, and the 27th Infantry Division were simultaneously to attack Waplitz and Hohenstein on a line running north from Mühlen. The enemy had pushed forward on the whole front and had occupied Allenstein.

Von der Goltz's Landwehr Division, which had been placed at our disposal by the General Headquarters, was coming up near Osterode and Biessellen. This division came from Schleswig-Holstein, where up to now it had been employed in guarding the canal and the coast. It was to take Hohenstein from the north-west.

The 1st Reserve Corps reached the neighborhood of Seeburg on the 26th. The 17th Army Corps had been engaged with a division of the Russian 6th Corps between Lautern and Gr. Bössau, north of Bischofsburg, and had driven it back in the direction of Bischofsburg.

The 6th Landwehr Brigade, which had advanced on the 24th and 25th from Lötzen to the northwest of Bischofsburg, had taken a successful part in the action.

The attack on Usdau was to begin at 4 A.M. on the 27th. We wanted to be present at this decisive battle, in order to be able to superintend on the spot the co-operation of the 1st and 20th Army Corps, orders for which had already been given. Just as we left Löbau for Gilgenburg the joyous news reached us that Usdau had fallen. I considered the battle won. However, this was somewhat premature. Soon after it transpired that Usdau had not yet been taken, and it fell only late in the afternoon. From a tactical point of view the Narew Army was now broken through. The 1st Army Corps threw the enemy back beyond Soldau and marched upon Neidenburg.

The 20th Army Corps, greatly exhausted as it was, was not so successful, and the 41st Infantry Division, near Gr. Gardienen, made no progress. Nor was any ground won farther north.

Von der Goltz's Landwehr Division closed in on Hohenstein.

We returned to Löbau in the afternoon not altogether satisfied.

On our arrival, news came through that the 1st Army Corps had been routed and that the remnants of this corps were arriving in Montowo. Such news was difficult to believe. A telephone inquiry to the railway commandant there brought out the fact that troops of the 1st Army Corps were collecting at that point, but later on it appeared that it was a question of only one battalion that had found itself in a very tight corner and given way. Another rather alarming discovery was that a number of supply columns were hurriedly retreating through Löbau.

A general has much to bear and needs strong nerves. The civilian is too inclined to think that war is only like the working out of an arithmetical problem with given numbers. It is anything but that. On both sides it is a case of wrestling with powerful, unknown physical and psychological forces, a struggle which inferiority in numbers makes all the more difficult. It means working with men of varying force of character and with their own views. The only quantity that is known and constant is the will of the leader.

All those who criticize the dispositions of a general ought first to study military history, unless they have themselves taken part in a war in a position of command. I should like to see such people compelled to conduct a battle themselves. They would be overwhelmed by the greatness of their task, and when they realized the obscurity of the situation, and the exacting nature of the enormous demands made upon them, they would doubtless be more modest. Only the head of the Government, or the statesman who decides on war, shoulders the same or a bigger burden of responsibility than that of the commander-in-chief. In his case it is a question of one great decision only, but the commander of an army is faced with decisions daily and hourly. He is continuously responsible for the welfare of many hundred thousands of persons, even of nations. For a soldier there is nothing greater, but at the same time more awesome and responsible, than to find himself at the head of an army or the entire armed forces of his country.

Late that night we received news in Löbau that the 1st Army Corps had reached Wartenburg. The Russian 6th Corps was in full retreat before the 17th Army Corps beyond Ortelsburg, and was again defeated south of Bischofsburg. Smaller forces were sent in pursuit, while the main body of the 17th Army

Corps bivouacked at and to the north of Mensguth, on the evening of the 27th.

Nothing remained to be done on the 28th but to give orders for the 1st Army Corps to occupy Neidenburg. In the mean time the corps had already made a turning movement in that direction. The 20th Army Corps was to carry out the attack which had been fixed for the 27th, and more especially to push forward the 41st Infantry Division. Von der Goltz's Landwehr Division was to attack Hohenstein. The 1st Reserve Corps and the 17th Army Corps were moved up west, covered against attack from Ortelsburg, to positions on a line running from Allenstein to Passenheim.

Early on the 28th we went to Frögenau and established ourselves in the open at the eastern end of the village. General von Scholtz was not far off. A very ineffective field telephone connected us with the 1st Army Corps, but no communication at all was possible with the other forces.

Our first impressions were by no means favorable. Neidenburg had certainly been taken, but the 41st Infantry Division had attacked Waplitz in a fog and been driven back. This division, which had suffered heavy casualties, was now holding positions west of Waplitz and anticipating a hostile counter-attack with the greatest anxiety. I sent an officer there by car to give me a report on the condition of the division, and his account was not encouraging. The Landwehr near Mühlen were not making progress. If the enemy attacked the right wing of the 20th Army Corps in great force, a grave crisis might result, and, at the best, the battle would be prolonged.

Now there was Rennenkampf's chance to intervene. But the enemy made no attack upon the 41st Infantry Division and the Niemen Army did not advance.

Captain Bartenwerffer, of the staff of the 17th Army

Corps, flew over the enemy lines, and brought good reports of the progress of his corps in the enemy's rear.

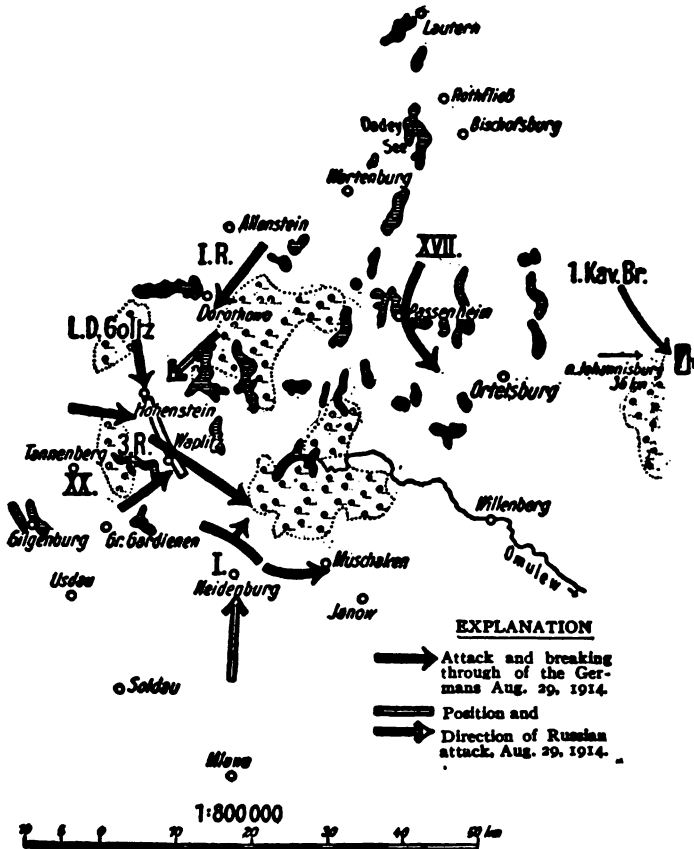


FIG. 3. TANNENBERG. SITUATION ON AUGUST 29, 1914

During the afternoon the situation changed to our advantage. The 3d Reserve Division, and later the 37th Infantry Division, too, won ground west of



Hohenstein; Von der Goltz's Landwehr Division entered Hohenstein itself. The enemy front appeared to be wavering. General von Hindenburg wanted to go straight on to Mühlen. We ran right into a momentary panic, created by Russian prisoners who were being taken to the rear in great numbers. This incident created an unfavorable impression, as the disorder spread far to the rear.

In the evening we went to Osterode. Owing to an unfortunate mobilization order the civil authorities had already left the town. This must have considerably increased the anxiety of the civil population.

We were not at all clear as to how things stood with the individual units; but there was no doubt that the battle was won. Whether or not it would prove a real Cannae was uncertain. The 1st Army Corps had orders to send a force to Willenberg, whither the 17th Army Corps was also to proceed. The retreat of the Russians was to be cut off.

During the night we learned further details. The Russian 13th Corps had advanced from Allenstein on Hohenstein, and had pressed the Landwehr severely. The 1st Reserve Corps had come down southwest of Allenstein—its further advance would close the ring round the Russian 13th Corps and thus conclude the whole operation, while the 1st and 17th Army Corps cut off the retreat of the other divisions.

On the morning of the 29th I decided to go to Hohenstein to try to disentangle the congestion caused by the troops getting mixed up. Operations against Rennenkampf's army had to be initiated, whether he advanced or stood where he was.

Still another incident occurred before we were certain of victory.

Early on the 29th we received a message by aeroplane that a hostile army corps was marching on

Neidenburg from the south and was nearing the town. It was therefore coming up in the rear of the 1st Army Corps, which, with its front facing north, was fighting the retreating Russians. Almost at the same moment we were called up from Neidenburg and informed that hostile shrapnel was falling on the town. Then we were cut off. All available troops were set marching in the direction of Neidenburg, to support the 1st Army Corps in the engagement we anticipated. But General von François had saved himself already by his own energy, and the enemy displayed more hesitation than the situation justified.

After giving these orders I set out for Hohenstein, and on the way went over the battle-field, which made a deep impression on me. East of Hohenstein our own columns were getting entangled with masses of Russian prisoners, and it was no easy task to restore order. The 1st Reserve Corps and the 20th Army Corps were assembled along the road from Allenstein to Hohenstein, and the army command had thus again at least two corps at its disposal.

The battle was drawing to a conclusion. The 3d Reserve Division had broken through the enemy lines and reached Muschaken, east of Neidenburg. The Russians, retiring through the thick woods, tried to break through the German ring at several points. At Muschaken, in particular, very heavy fighting took place on the 30th, but without in any way influencing the issue of the battle.

General Samsonow shot himself and was buried near Willenberg without being recognized. His widow, who was in Germany in connection with matters concerning prisoners of war, was able to trace his grave by a locket which had been taken for identification purposes from the body of the fallen general when he was buried.

The Russian generals who were taken prisoner

arrived at Osterode and reported to General von Hindenburg.

The number of prisoners taken and the amount of booty captured are already well known.

The enemy losses in killed and wounded, too, were extremely heavy. The widely circulated report that thousands of Russians were driven into the marshes and there perished is a myth; no marsh was to be found anywhere near.

One of the most brilliant battles in the history of the world had been fought. It had been the achievement of troops which had been fighting for weeks, sometimes unsuccessfully. To the training of our army in peace-time, alone, did we owe this feat. The battle was a glorious triumph for the generals and their troops, indeed, for every officer and man, and the whole country.

Germany and Austria-Hungary rejoiced—the world was silent.

At my suggestion, the battle was named the battle of Tannenberg, in memory of that other battle long ago in which the Teutonic Knights defeated the united Lithuanian and Polish hosts. Is any German, as then, ever going to allow the Lett, and more especially the Pole, to take advantage of our misfortune to do us violence? Are centuries of old German culture to be lost?

I could not rejoice whole-heartedly at our mighty victory, for the strain imposed upon my nerves by the uncertainty about *Rennenkampf's* army had been too great. All the same, we were proud of this battle. The victory had been brought about by a breakthrough, an encircling movement, firm resolution to win, and intelligent limitation of aims. Despite our inferiority on the Eastern front, we had succeeded in assembling on the battle-field a force nearly as strong

as that of the foe. I thought of General Count von Schlieffen and thanked him for his teaching.

In the Protestant church at Allenstein, General von Hindenburg and I rendered thanks to Almighty God for this victory.

I had not a moment to spare for relaxation. I had to work out the regrouping of the army for further operations. It was an uncommonly difficult task simultaneously to finish one battle and make plans for the next. Innumerable other matters had to be attended to betweenwhiles. One urgent matter was the removal of the prisoners. Having regard for the uncertainty of the situation, their numbers alone were a heavy burden.

I was decorated with the Iron Cross, Second Class, of which I was exceedingly proud. Even now, when I think of Liège and Tannenberg, my heart swells with pardonable satisfaction. The value of the Iron Cross, Second Class, dwindled in the course of the war. That is quite natural, though regretable. But the Order should be worn with pride by any one who has honorably won it.

#### IV

On the Western front the victorious progress of the German arms was still unchecked. Accordingly, General Headquarters considered that it could reinforce the Eighth Army with three army corps from the West. The telegram announcing the proposed reinforcements arrived just at the commencement of the battle of Tannenberg. Later I was asked whether one army corps could be retained in the West, and as I had not asked for reinforcements, I assented. So only two army corps arrived, the Guard Reserve Corps, the 11th Corps, and the 8th Cavalry Division.

The decision to weaken the forces on the Western

front was premature, but, of course, we in the East could not know that, for the reports from the West were favorable. But it was particularly fateful that the reinforcements destined for the Eastern front were drawn from the right wing, which was fighting for a decision, instead of from the left wing, which was stronger than was necessary after the battle in Lorraine had been fought. The corps which was to have been the third for the Eastern front was left in Lorraine.

The situation in Galicia had already become threatening. The Russian main forces had hurled themselves on the Austro-Hungarian armies and beaten them east of Lemburg at the end of August.

The Austrian Army was not, at the beginning of the war, a first-class fighting instrument. Had we really entertained aggressive intentions before the war, we would have insisted on Austria-Hungary's improving her armaments. Here railway communications, which were totally inadequate, would also have been extended. Our neglect in that respect was, in any case, a great mistake. The Triple Alliance was only a political union, while the Franco-Russian alliance was of a definitely military character, and this constituted a great advantage to our enemies.

Even our arrangements with Austria-Hungary in the event of a joint war were of the poorest. General Count von Schlieffen always feared a breach of faith, which indeed actually occurred. A scheme of mutual operations existed only in the roughest outlines. The deployment of the Austro-Hungarian armies on the farther side of the river San was justified only if they felt themselves superior to the Russian Army without outside help, as many Austro-Hungarian officers believed, or if we could cross the river Narew simultaneously with strong forces. But this we were not in a position to do, as the last army bill had not granted us

the three extra army corps for which the General Staff had hoped. Further, we now had also to make up on the Western front for Italy's defection.

According to former military agreements with Italy, three Italian army corps and two cavalry divisions were to help in Alsace, while the main body of the army, minus the coast-defense forces, were to be assembled on the Franco-Italian frontier. Simultaneously, the fleet was to endeavor to cut France off from her colonies in North Africa. These arrangements were in force for some time—but subsequently lapsed. Then at the express wish of General Pollio, Chief of the Italian General Staff, these plans were once more worked at.

General Pollio died in the summer of 1914—shortly before the outbreak of war. There was not the least necessity for France to leave even a single soldier on her southeast frontier; she could employ every soldier against us, for she knew perfectly well that Italy would not come into the war on our side. Our former ally thus did us untold harm. Her attitude toward England was not to be misunderstood. Animosity certainly existed between Italy and Austria-Hungary, but although this was of long standing, it did not prevent Italy entering into an alliance with us and Austria-Hungary. This alliance brought Italy many advantages, and we naturally expected that she would feel under an obligation to us.

A healthy national egoism is easy to understand and is found in every nation. But there are certain ethical laws which must not be violated, and that is precisely what Italy did. So she cannot complain of the adverse criticism we leveled at her during the four years of war.

The critical position of the Austro-Hungarian Army at the end of August, opposed by greatly superior

Russian forces, was not to be misunderstood. General von Conrad, Chief of the Austrian General Staff, insisted, quite properly from his point of view, that we should cross the river Narew. But seeing that the Eighth Army was still inferior in numbers to that of General Rennenkampf's, it was impossible to accede to this request. An advance in the direction of Mława-Pultusk could at any time be stopped by the advance of General Rennenkampf toward the Allenstein-Elbing line. There was, therefore, no alternative but to deal first with the Russian Niemen Army.

Apparently still under the influence of the battle of Tannenberg, Rennenkampf had withdrawn his advanced units several kilometers, but seemingly he intended to stand between the river Pregel and Lake Mauer. The Eighth Army was compelled to fight a second battle and had to use all its available strength.

In the execution of this plan, the reinforcements from the West were detrained on the Allenstein-Elbing line, and the Eighth Army was concentrated ready to advance between Willenberg and the Allenstein front.

Only small forces were left behind for the defense of the frontier near Soldau. They were to advance into Poland in the direction of Mława.

As soon as the troops had been deployed, we intended to attack Rennenkampf on a wide front between the river Pregel and Lake Mauer, while enveloping his left wing beyond Łötzen and farther south. The task delegated to our outermost southern wing was to guard the army from attack from Augustowo and Osowiec, where hostile reinforcements were expected. The concentrated Eighth Army was to fight in three groups from the river Pregel to Lake Mauer, east of Łötzen and in the direction of Lyck.

At the beginning of September the following units were up ready to advance:

The garrisons of the Vistula fortresses, near Soldau. Von der Goltz's Landwehr Division, near Neidenburg.

3d Reserve Division and 1st Army Corps, near Willenberg, Ortelsburg, 1st Cavalry Brigade west of Johannsburg.

17th Army Corps, Passenheim.

20th and 11th Army Corps, and 1st Reserve Corps in and on both sides of Allenstein.

Guard Reserve Corps coming up from Elbing toward the lower course of the river Passarge.

8th Cavalry Division advancing in the direction of Lötzen.

The 1st Cavalry Division, minus one cavalry brigade, was still occupying its positions facing the Niemen Army. It was also to advance *via* Lötzen.

The main Königsberg Reserve holding the line of the Deime.

The main Posen Reserve and the Count von Bredow Landwehr Division were being brought up, but did not arrive in time for the battle.

The supply columns and trains of the 1st Reserve Corps and the 27th Army Corps, which were behind the river Passarge when the forward movement started, had to carry out some difficult movements, but finally succeeded in reaching their positions without too much friction.

Some Russian cavalry, before which our 1st Cavalry Division had to give way, had temporarily penetrated west right as far as the Passarge and Wormditt, without doing any military damage, however. Strange to say, they had not destroyed even the main railway line from Elbing to Königsberg.

It was naturally of the utmost importance to us to get our railways into working order again, especially those we had had to destroy ourselves during our retreat



from Gumbinnen. This was particularly essential in regard to the station of Korschen. This station ought to have been thoroughly demolished; but within forty-eight hours of our recovering possession it could be utilized again. It was lucky for us that the work of destruction had not been carried out as thoroughly as I had expected. The troops as yet were not sufficiently experienced. It was plain that special technical instruction was needed. I made a mental note of this for future occasions.

## V

The advance against Rennenkampf's army began on September 4. On the 7th the Guard Reserve Corps, the 1st Reserve Corps, the 11th and 20th Army Corps intrenched a position in front of the enemy lines at Wehlau-Gerdauen-Nordenburg-Angenburg, between the river Pregel and Lake Mauer, and attacked during the following days according to plan. The engagements, particularly those of the 20th Army Corps, did not go well for us. The Russians made a powerful counter-attack. The enemy positions were strong and cleverly constructed, and we should never have got the upper hand of them with the arms and ammunition at our disposal, had it not been that the projected enveloping movement near Lötzen and the fortified chain of lakes were beginning to have their effect.

Even east of Lötzen, which had held out bravely against enemy attacks all this time, things did not look promising. The 17th Army Corps and the 1st and 8th Cavalry Divisions, which had advanced from the fortress, made only slow progress northeast of the lakes, on September 8 and 9. They had some very hard fighting round Kruglauken and Possessern. The 1st Army Corps, which had pressed forward from Nikolai-ken and Johannisburg, had to be deflected sharply

north from the east side of the lake line. By this movement it secured more room for the 17th Army Corps by the evening of the 9th. The 3d Reserve Division, with Von der Goltz's Landwehr Division behind it, was still advancing in the Bialla-Lyck direction. On September 3 it had already encountered the enemy in very superior force near Bialla.

This operation also was extraordinarily daring. To begin with, the Russian Niemen Army, with its twenty-four infantry divisions, was very much stronger than the Eighth Army, with its fifteen to sixteen divisions. Moreover, the Russian divisions consisted of sixteen battalions, and ours, at that time, of twelve. The Russian fighting strength was further increased by from four to six divisions, which were being assembled round Osowiec and Augustovo. This immense superiority could be concentrated against us at any moment and at any chosen point. Our right wing, in particular, was in danger to the east of the lakes. It might be overwhelmed. Even in such a situation as this we did not hesitate for a moment to venture a battle. Our superior training was in our favor. Tannenberg had given us a great advantage.

The army command would have liked the right wing to have been stronger, and a division of the 20th Army Corps, west of the lakes, had been kept ready to be placed at our disposal. But this division had to be returned to the corps. The front of fifty kilometers, on which the four corps attacked the enemy, was certainly too long. Further, the staff of the Guard Reserve Corps feared a Russian attack, and had therefore concentrated its unit. The north wing had to stand firm on the Pregel, otherwise the Eighth Army might be outflanked there. The attack of the enveloping wing had to be stronger than had originally been calculated. We had to wait and see whether our main

attack would succeed or fail. Hard fighting would be the decisive factor here. We could only do everything in our power to insure the result for which we were striving.

On the morning of September 10 we received the decisive news that during the night of the 9th the enemy had given way before the 1st Reserve Corps to the north of Gerdauen—probably in consequence of the continuous attacks of the 1st and 27th Army Corps. It was said that the corps had occupied their position, and intended to march on. The rejoicing at headquarters can be imagined. A great success had once more been achieved, but still nothing decisive. The Russian Army was not yet beaten, by any means. Northeast of Lötzen we had had only local successes. It was important to carry out a frontal attack with all our strength, and throw ourselves on the receding enemy while the enveloping wing advanced east of Rominten Woods toward the Wirballen-Kovno road. In this way we intended to drive the Russians as far as possible toward the Niemen

It had also to be taken into account that Rennen-kampf, who was now in touch with the reinforcements arriving farther south, would be able to make a vigorous attack in any direction. Our lines were very thin everywhere, though the two northern groups, which had hitherto been separated by Lake Mauer, had joined up again. The situation was extremely critical and the tension was great.

The troops had a fresh task before them. Keeping in close touch with one another, they had to pursue the enemy unceasingly by forced marches, and attack him whenever he made a stand. At the same time they had to wait for the co-operation of neighboring columns before making local enveloping movements, so as to minimize the losses. The 17th Army Corps, and more

particularly the 1st Army Corps on the extreme right, and the 1st and 8th Cavalry Divisions, had to strike again and again. The marching orders for the different sections, beginning at the left, were roughly as follows:

Königsberg Main Reserve: Königsberg—Tilsit.

Guard Reserve Corps: Gross-Audowöhnen.

1st Reserve Corps: Insterburg—Pillkallen.

11th Army Corps: North of Darkehmen, Gumbinnen—Stallupönen.

20th Army Corps: Darkehmen, half-way to Wirballen—Lake Wyschtyt.

17th Army Corps: Due north of Rominten Woods toward Wyschtynice.

1st Army Corps: Due southeast of Rominten Woods toward Mariampol.

1st and 8th Cavalry Divisions: In advance of the 1st Army Corps toward the Wirballen-Kovno road.

These movements did not turn out quite as I had hoped. Friend and foe were difficult to distinguish. Our own columns occasionally fired on one another. The troops made too vigorous frontal attacks, and did not await the co-operation of neighboring columns. But the most serious difficulty was caused by the fact that on September 11 the 11th Army Corps thought it was being attacked by a very superior force. This was quite conceivable and had to be taken into account. Under the existing conditions as regards the strength of the two forces, the front line required the close tactical support of the enveloping corps. We had therefore to decide to bring the 17th and 1st Army Corps farther north than was originally intended. After a few hours the belief of the 11th Army Corps proved to be unfounded. But the order had already been given to the enveloping wing. Later, the corps were again diverted to their original route, but by then at least half a day had been lost.

The Eighth Army did magnificent work. The whole advance, which covered well over one hundred kilometers in four days, was a brilliant march of victory for these troops, exhausted as they were by continuous fighting and strain of every kind. This applied more particularly to the original units of the Eighth Army; the Guard Reserve Corps and the 11th Army Corps had fought valiantly in the West at Namur, but they had certainly had an easier time hitherto.

The results of the battle were not so obvious as those of Tannenberg. There were no operations in the enemy's rear, for they were not possible. The enemy did not make a stand, but withdrew, so that he could be forced back still farther only by frontal and flanking attacks. While at Tannenberg we took over 90,000 prisoners, we could now count only 45,000. But whatever could have been done under the circumstances had been accomplished.

As a matter of fact, Rennenkampf does not seem to have ever intended a serious stand. At any rate, he began his retreat very early in the operations and marched at night. Our airmen did certainly note the course of some retreating columns, but their reports were too vague. The Russians knew how to conduct retreats and move masses of troops without using the highroads.

Our continuous movements, combined with the ever-present menace of envelopment, drove the retreating Russian Army before us so quickly that it crossed the Niemen in a state of dissolution. For the next few weeks it was not to be regarded as first-class fighting material, unless the Russians should reinforce it with fresh troops.

The battle of the Masurian Lakes has not received the recognition it deserves. It was a decisive engagement, ambitiously planned and carefully executed against

an extraordinary numerical superiority. It was attended with grave risks, but the enemy did not realize his strength. He did not even attempt to fight it out, but withdrew so very hastily that, under our pressure, the retreat took on the character of a flight.

Away from the main battle-field the 3d Reserve Division, under its energetic leader, General von Morgen, and Von der Goltz's Landwehr Division had fought a very successful action against a superior enemy force near Bialla on September 8, and then had beaten the reinforcements which were brought up. In so doing they had removed a grave source of danger to the army fighting farther north. General von der Goltz was held up outside Osowiec. General von Morgen took Augustovo and Suwalki after heavy fighting. The intention of the Grand Duke Nicholas to relieve the pressure on Rennenkampf from that quarter was frustrated.

On September 13 the battle was practically over. On that day the situation was roughly as follows:

Fortress garrisons under General von Mühlmann at Mława.

Von der Goltz's Landwehr Division before Osowiec.  
3d Reserve Division at Augustovo-Suwalki.

1st and 8th Cavalry Divisions and 1st Army Corps, far ahead toward Mariampol.

17th and 20th Army Corps, beyond the Wyschtynice-Wirballen line.

11st Army Corps, to the north of Wirballen.

1st Reserve Corps, Vladislavoff.

Guard Reserve Corps, already withdrawn north-east of Wehlau.

Königsberg Main Reserve, Tilsit.

Thus in the center of the field of battle several corps had closed in on one another. In a sense, there was no room for some of them, and these would be the first available for further operations. At the very begin-

ning of the advance against Rennenkampf there could be no doubt whatever that under no circumstances would it be continued beyond the Niemen.

After settling with Rennenkampf I had thoughts of proceeding with all our available forces over the southern frontier against the line of the Narew (our flanks being protected by the east frontier of East Prussia), so as to co-operate more effectively with the Austrian Army, in accordance with General von Conrad's plan. I had not yet been informed of the heavy reverses which had been sustained by the Austrian Army. Orders were issued in conformity with this intention, but it was already too late to put it into execution.

## VI

During the whole of the victorious advance of the Eighth Army from the neighborhood of Allenstein into enemy territory the Army Headquarters Staff [had followed close behind the troops. I have always insisted that we should be in the closest possible touch with both commanders and men. It was particularly necessary for the purposes of giving orders and receiving reports, as technical means of communication were still defective.

Telephone facilities in the province of East Prussia were very meager. Some of the officials had forsaken their posts. The wireless apparatus rendered good service, but only the cavalry and the Army Headquarters Staff possessed it. So I was obliged to rely mainly on motor-cars and relays of staff-officers.

The members of the volunteer motor corps did magnificent work as despatch-riders. They accomplished journeys which recalled the most daring patrol work. I needed the few airmen urgently for reconnoitering, and could not spare them for despatch-bearing.

ing. But in spite of the scanty means of communication, we always succeeded in being well informed and getting our orders through in good time. I used the telephone a good deal also, giving encouragement where it seemed advisable, and blaming in no measured terms where the success of the whole operation required it. This personal intercourse with the commanding officers was useful, as it afforded opportunities for personal contact and co-operation.

We made our headquarters in various places. Nordenburg was the first place we came to which had been in the hands of the Russians for a considerable time. The dirt there was incredible. The market was full of filth. The rooms were disgustingly unclean.

At Insterburg we stayed at the Dessauer Hotel, in the same quarters which Rennenkampf had left. The Grand Duke Nicholas is also said to have left the town at the last moment.

We had an opportunity of inspecting the Russian positions more closely, and were all deeply thankful that we had not been obliged to storm them. We should have paid a heavy price in blood.

Many of the Russian troops behaved in an exemplary manner in East Prussia in August and September. Wine cellars and provision stores were guarded, and Rennenkampf kept strict discipline at Insterburg. But the war brought with it endless hardships and terrors. The Cossacks were rough and cruel. They burned and plundered. Many inhabitants were killed, women were outraged, and civilians sometimes carried off. These actions were for the most part quite senseless, and one sought in vain for any reason for them. The people had not offered the slightest opposition to the Russians; they were docile and had not taken part in the fighting, in accordance with our wishes. The Russians alone must bear the responsibility for their misdeeds.



The Russian Army had been a heavy burden on East Prussia. Now we felt proudly that we had rescued German soil from the enemy. The joy and gratitude of the people were very great.

This province was not rescued only to come under a foreign yoke. Heaven preserve us from such a humiliation!

On September 14 we were at Insterburg, enjoying to the full our satisfaction over our victory and splendid achievements. All the greater was my surprise at my appointment as Chief of Staff of the Southern Army, which was being formed under General von Schubert at Breslau.

## VII

In the West the German advance had ended in a retreat.

The right wing of the German force in the West was too weak and did not extend far enough; the withdrawal of the Guard Reserve Corps and this 11th Army Corps had made itself felt with fatal results. Of course, this wing should have been strengthened by corps drawn from Lorraine and Alsace. That was provided in General Count von Schlieffen's plan. Further, it was quite contrary to his plan to let the German forces there advance so far forward against the Lunéville-Epinal line and be completely held up. That would have been the fate of the entire army if, instead of advancing through Belgium, we had kept our right wing south of Longwy. While we were bleeding to death before the fortresses on the Verdun-Belfort line, our right wing would have been attacked from Belgium and beaten by the combined Belgian, French, and English armies. At the same time we should have lost our industrial region on the Lower Rhine. Our ultimate defeat would have been certain.

The order to retreat from the Marne was issued, whether on good grounds or not I have never been able to ascertain.

It was obvious that the war would now continue for a long time and require enormous sacrifices of the Fatherland. The hour had come when everything, literally everything, would have to be staked on the war, and the work of enlightening our people would have to be undertaken on a large scale. I was astonished at the optimism I found prevailing in Berlin toward the end of October 1914. There seemed to be no realization of the tremendous gravity of our situation.

It was nothing less than a fatality, in view of the numerical inferiority of the Dual Alliance and the fact that Germany was surrounded by enemies, that she did not win the war which had been forced upon her, by some overwhelming lightning stroke, and so lay low an enemy superior in numbers but inferior in training. We now had to face the prospect that in the course of the war the training of the armies would become equalized to a certain extent, although it was reasonable to hope that the German Army would long maintain a certain advantage over the others by virtue of its great traditions. The heavy losses in officers might be a serious matter. At all events, it was essential that we should do all in our power to maintain our superiority in training, so that the enemy's superiority in men might not be felt so much.

In particular, we had to face the prospect that England would make use of the time to increase her armaments and raise a powerful army in addition to her fleet. She had quite enough men.

In view of this we could not neglect any means that might still enable us to win the war. Germany had to become an armed camp. That was the burden of

the New Year's message I sent to a newspaper on January 1, 1915.

In the autumn of 1914 and the winter of 1914-15 General Headquarters had raised from eighteen to twenty new divisions. We formed new divisions out of the Landwehr and Landsturm formations. We began by reducing the number of battalions in a division from twelve to nine, and forming fresh divisions out of the battalions thus liberated, allotting to each its complement of artillery and special arms. We did a great deal, though in many directions we did not do enough.

The Eighth Army at this time could quite easily have sent some corps to the Western front. I do not know whether the idea was ever considered by General Headquarters, or whether the situation of the Austro-Hungarian Army made it out of the question. The latter, as I now realized, was unfortunately retreating, completely defeated, across the San, with terrible losses. The Russians were following up the Austrians. A Russian invasion of Moravia and then Upper Silesia seemed possible. The Austro-Hungarian Army would have to be supported if it were not to be annihilated. An advance of the Eighth Army across the Narew, the operation which had been planned at the beginning of September, would now have been useless. Help must be sent immediately and could not be too powerful. We were not able to reinforce the Western front.

In the instructions which I received at Insterburg on the evening of the 14th it was stated that two corps of the Eighth Army were to form the Southern Army in Upper Silesia. This looked like nothing more than a defensive measure; at any rate, it would be quite inadequate to restore the situation in Galicia. We had not merely to hold the enemy in check; we had to act.

Accordingly, in a conversation over the telephone,

I suggested, both to General Headquarters and General von Moltke himself, that the whole of the Eighth Army should be sent to Upper Silesia and Posen under General von Hindenburg, who had just been put in command. In spite of the danger that Russia would bring up fresh forces in a further attempt to invade the unfortunate province of East Prussia, only weak forces were to be left for its protection. I certainly hoped that such an invasion was a long way off. Even during the operations arrangements had been made to strengthen and extend the defenses of Lötzen and the lakes. We not only insisted that a scheme should be drawn up, but that the work should be put in hand at once. The Angerapp line was also to be fortified. These measures were the effect of the altered situation, and subsequently proved to have been thoroughly justified.

General von Moltke promised that my suggestion should be considered, and gave me a short account of the sudden change in the situation on the Western front. Up to that time we had heard only rumors of it. General von Moltke was deeply moved by the state of affairs in the West.

That was my last official conversation with this remarkable man. He had a keen grip of military affairs, and could handle a great plan of campaign with extraordinary mastery. But he lacked vigor and his inclinations were more pacifistic than warlike. I can recall many of my interviews with him. At the beginning of the war his health had been seriously affected by two treatments at Carlsbad, which he underwent within a period of a few months.

At this time the War Minister, General von Falkenhayn, began to direct operations.

On the evening of September 14 I took leave of General von Hindenburg and of my comrades. I did not find it easy to leave the Commander-in-chief and the

staff after two victorious battles. General von Hindenburg had always agreed to my suggestions, and gladly accepted the responsibility of consenting to them. A fine sense of confidence had grown up between us—the confidence of men who think alike. Among the staff there was complete unanimity of view in all military matters.

I left Insterburg on the morning of September 15, traveling by car through Graudenz and Thorn to Breslau, my destination. I knew absolutely nothing about my new sphere of action. It seemed to me more limited than my previous one, but I soon found that I had a great and important field for my activities.

## THE CAMPAIGN IN POLAND, AUTUMN 1914

**At General Headquarters, Austro-Hungarian Army—The Concentration in Upper Silesia—The Theater of Operations—The Advance on the Vistula—The Battles of the Vistula—The Retreat from Warsaw—The Withdrawal to the German Frontier—The Commander-in-chief on the Eastern Front—The Concentration of All Available Forces—The Plan of Operations—The Battles in North Poland.**

(Maps IV, V, and VI)

### I

THE journey to Breslau was not exactly cheerful. I went through Allenstein and had dinner at the same hotel in which I had lived. Life had already resumed its old course as in times of peace. I was in Graudenz by the afternoon, and traveled through wind and rain, *via* Bromberg, to Posen, where I arrived in pitch darkness and spent the night.

I was connected in many ways with the province and town of Posen. My father, who was descended from a family of Pomeranian merchants, lived there until after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71. I myself had been stationed at Posen, and was glad to see it again. I was there from 1902 until 1904, as senior staff-officer of the corps command of the 5th Corps. While holding this position (and also my previous one of senior staff-officer of the 9th Division at Glogau) I had an opportunity of seeing the difficulties that surround the administration of this province. I had been in the district of Jarotchin and Pleschen for maneuvers. Poland has shown us no gratitude for what we have done for her. Those who had repeatedly warned Ger-

many against her aspirations were quite right. With deep grief I see my native province faced with a period of much difficulty and sorrow.

On the morning of September 16 I arrived in Breslau. A telegram came almost immediately, saying that General Headquarters agreed to my proposal of the evening of the 14th. General von Hindenburg, with the bulk of the Eighth Army, was to march immediately to the support of the Austrian Army in Upper Silesia. This force was to form the Ninth Army.

The following remained in East Prussia, forming the Eighth Army: 1st Cavalry Division, 1st Army Corps, 1st Reserve Division, 3d Reserve Division, Von der Goltz's Landwehr Division, several Landwehr brigades, the main Königsberg reserve, and also the garrisons of the Vistula fortresses with the exception of the 35th Reserve Division which had been formed mainly out of the garrison of Thorn. General von Schubert was placed in command.

The Ninth Army was formed out of the 8th Cavalry Division, the 11th, 17th, and 20th Army Corps, the Guard Reserve Corps, the 35th Reserve Division, and Count von Bredow's Landwehr Division. The line of march had to be settled. Landsturm forces, which had taken up extended positions on the Polish side of the frontier between Kattowitz and Thorn, were able to cover their movements.

The Army Headquarters Staff wanted to concentrate the army somewhere between Beuthen and Pleschen. General Headquarters, however, in view of the situation of the Austrian Army, thought it necessary that the movement should be more directly southeast, so that the fact that we were German reinforcements for Austria-Hungary and the Austrian Army might be more obvious. Accordingly, the 11th Army Corps, forming the right wing of the Ninth Army, went to

Cracow, and the left was brought down farther south to correspond. The proximity of the Austrians necessarily had the effect of cramping the movements of the Ninth Army, but no serious disadvantages ensued.

On September 17 General von Hindenburg arrived at Breslau with some of the staff. Once more we had been called upon to work together in an important military position.

I myself went on the 18th to Neu Sandec, the headquarters of the Austro-Hungarian Army. The journey, in wet, gloomy weather, was a new experience for me. It was my first visit to Upper Silesia, with its highly developed culture. In Galicia I became acquainted with what is probably the most neglected region in Europe, and gained some idea of Polish husbandry. The Polish Jew is very backward, even more so than those of his faith and race in Poland proper. This is not altogether the fault of this people, but partly attributable to their government.

In Neu Sandec I reported myself to the Archduke Frederick, a man with the warm heart of a German and a genuine soldierly character. I remember him with feelings of the highest esteem. The "brain" of the operations of the Austrian Army was General von Conrad, a clever and distinguished general of great mental adaptability. He was a strategist with an unusually fertile mind, and always instilled fresh vitality into the Imperial and Royal Army. That must always stand to his credit.

Unfortunately, the Austrian Army was not always strong enough to carry out his bold plans. Too little had been done for the army in times of peace. It had been openly neglected, and, unlike our army in Germany, had not that prestige in its own country which encourages energetic action. The flower of the combatant Officers' Corps, which had held the army together



in spite of conflicting nationalities, had fallen by that time; those who remained left much to be desired in many cases, and failed to cement the fabric of the army. The old true and valiant soldier-stock had also fallen on the battle-field.

The Austro-Hungarian Army was quite differently trained from the German Army. Up to that time General von Conrad had not thought very highly of our peace-time training. He now acknowledged to me that he was in favor of its principles. In particular he was convinced that it is impossible to attach too much importance to anything that strengthens discipline. The General Staff of the Austrian Army gave, he thought, too much time to theory and neglected the practical work. Too many orders were given from above, and any inclination for independent action or personal responsibility was suppressed.

Communications were well organized, but absorbed an enormous number of officers.

My relations with General von Conrad were always satisfactory, especially at our occasional meetings. I often had the impression that the Austrian liaison officer on my staff did not report facts only, but gossip as well. The liaison officer of an allied Power has a particularly important mission. He can easily do harm, and for that reason must be a man of exceptionally strong character.

Both past and future operations were discussed. In the course of its retreat the Austrian Army had retired over the San and even the Wislok. Its more than forty divisions were now crowded together on the west bank of the Wislok, between the Carpathians and the Vistula. I could not understand how there was room for it there, but, as I heard later, the large number of prisoners explained the situation. The army was terribly exhausted. Acting on his own re-

sponsibility and trusting to Germany's help, General von Conrad undertook to take the offensive again early in October, even if the Austrian Army had meanwhile to retire still farther under Russian pressure.

The advance of the Ninth Army was already protecting the northern wing of the Austrian Army against possible envelopment. It was now to come up with the latter, and to join in its forward movement north of the Vistula. The allied armies were then to attack the Russians wherever they found them. At the same time the Ninth Army was to keep a sharp lookout on its exposed left wing and left flank.

On the Russian side there were only a few cavalry divisions and rifle brigades in the broad bend of the Vistula open to the west. These had not been able to prevent the German covering frontier force from taking up positions on Polish soil, or Von Woyrsch's Landwehr Corps from marching right across Poland through Radom to the Vistula and crossing north of the confluence of the San. This corps had given assistance to the Austrian Army on the east side of the river before the latter's defeat.

The main body of the Russian armies was still to the east, with weak forces on the west bank of the San. The groups which had been defeated in East Prussia were behind the upper Narew and the Niemen. The Siberian Army Corps had not all arrived on the western frontier of Russia. Some of them were still on the way. They were particularly good, and gave us a great deal of trouble.

It had been a bitter disappointment that our diplomacy had not succeeded in keeping Japan from joining our enemies. That was the result of our unfortunate policy in pulling the chestnuts out of the fire for Russia after the peace of Shimonoseki in 1895 and preventing Japan from seizing Port Arthur. Russia never gave

us any thanks for this, and it did us infinite harm with Japan. She naturally could not understand what interest we had in weakening her position.

The ultimatum handed to us by the Japanese Government in August 1914 is said to have corresponded word for word with our ultimatum of 1895. We spoke at that time of the restoration of Port Arthur; now Japan spoke of the restoration of Kiao-chau. The Japanese knows how to take his revenge!

As regards prospective operations, it was to be expected that the Russians would pursue the Austrian Army, in spite of all the difficulties an advance involved. The space south of the Sandomir-Cracow stretch of the Vistula was indeed much too narrow for the Russians. An invasion of Hungary was out of the question for them at that time, as they ran the risk of being defeated north of the Carpathians. It could be taken for granted that the Russians would also advance below the confluence of the San; in what strength and on what extent of front depended essentially on whether they knew of the new German reinforcements and how they had taken their defeat in East Prussia.

As a matter of fact, the pursuit by the Russians across the San and the investment of Przemysl were undertaken by weak forces only. In the first place, they temporarily reinforced their troops on the Niemen. Immediately afterward, however, when they realized the significance of the German advance, all their forces, including the newly arrived Siberian Army Corps, were employed for a powerful advance over the Vistula on a wide front from Warsaw to the confluence of the San. The movement was in course of development during our discussions at Neu Sandec. We had to prepare for the imminent advance of the Russians across the San and north of the upper Vistula. In order to meet this, and bearing in mind the possi-

bility of a flanking movement from Warsaw, it seemed advisable to bring part of the Austrian Army, which was crowded up, and our own Landwehr Corps to the north bank of the Vistula. The Austrian Army south of the Vistula was still strong enough to meet any demands that might be made upon it.

Most of the transport supplied for our columns and trains was too heavy for the Polish theater of war. In any case, we had not enough of them. I therefore asked General von Conrad to requisition light transport, and he let us have all we wanted. It consisted of quite light vehicles, drawn by small, hardy horses, and driven by peasants. These were soon given the nickname of "Panje" transport. "Panje" horses and "Panje" wagons also distinguished themselves on the Western front. The origin of the name was the habit of drivers addressing one another as "Panje," meaning "sir." Our men also used to address them in that way.

The military conference at Neu Sandec ended satisfactorily in complete harmony of views. A single command was not established, for General von Hindenburg and I preferred to remain independent.

In the course of the discussions about the delimitation of the prospective lines of communication it looked as though there would be friction. Austria-Hungary, as always, looked after her own interests in a measure which was not justified by her military achievements. She acted rightly from her point of view, but it was certainly regrettable that the Berlin authorities always gave way. They feared that Austria would make a separate peace with the Entente, which I believed to be a physical impossibility. However, in September 1914 the demarcation of the lines of communication was made in accordance with German requirements, and there was no friction with the Austrian High Command.

## II

The Ninth Army was ready for operations on September 27. Army headquarters were at Beuthen. The dispositions were:

11th Army Corps,	}	due northeast of Cracow.
Guard Reserve Corps,		
20th Army Corps,	}	between Kattowitz and
17th Army Corps,		Kreuzburg.
35th Reserve Division,	}	
8th Cavalry Division,		
Count von Bredow's		between Kempen and
Landwehr Division,		Kalisz.

The last three divisions formed one unit under General von Frommel. The Landsturm formations guarding the frontier were made fit for simple duties in the line by being formed into brigades and supplied with artillery from the fortresses.

To the east of the Vistula the nearest strong German force was a part of the Eighth Army, near Mława. Von der Goltz's Landwehr Division was bombarding Osowiec. The rest of the Eighth Army had pressed forward as far as the line of the Niemen between Grodno and Kovno, in order to give the impression that the Germans intended to continue the offensive there.

On September 29 Rennenkampf, who had received not inconsiderable reinforcements, attacked here, and during the following weeks forced the Eighth Army back to and, near Lyck, over the frontier.

The Eighth Army was, of course, under the command of General von Hindenburg. But we were so much occupied with our own affairs, and, further, communications became so increasingly difficult, that we were unable to exercise any control over the operations of our old army. This was not possible until

November, when the Ninth Army received a separate army commander and General von Hindenburg was relieved of the direct command of it in the field. The coming operations of the Ninth Army were in no way affected by events on the front of the Eighth Army.

On our right wing the situation of our allies had considerably improved. The Russian pursuit across the Wislok was only half-hearted. The Austro-Hungarian Army was able to take breath and begin its advance early in October. The First Army, under General von Dankl (destined for the advance north of the upper Vistula), and the Landwehr Corps were waiting south of the river, between the Dunajec and Cracow, to join in the advance of the Ninth Army.

This corps deserves more detailed notice. It was composed of a Landwehr division from Posen and one from Silesia. We had originally intended to use it principally for frontier defense. But, as always happens, wherever troops may be, they get drawn in when it comes to fighting. Thus in August the Landwehr Corps had joined in the advance into Poland and across the Vistula. This had involved a good many improvised arrangements among the divisions. After the crossing of the Vistula they joined in the heavy fighting in which the Austro-Hungarians were engaged south of Lubin. They then accompanied the Austrian Army in its retreat through the Tanew region, a roadless waste of marsh and forest east of the lower San.

As early as August the Landwehr Corps had been placed under General von Hindenburg's command. But we were unable to interfere and had to allow the corps commander complete freedom in making his decisions. This was all the easier for us as that excellent officer General von Woyrsch and Colonel Heye, his splendid Chief of Staff, were well known to us.

Shortly before my departure from Insterburg a motor-

driver turned up with some documents, and reported that these were such of the archives of the Landwehr Corps as had been saved. He explained that the corps had been annihilated and General von Woyrsch and his Chief of Staff killed. It was not until some days later that we were able to ascertain the facts and realize that the rumors were false.

The corps had succeeded in fighting its way through. We, at Breslau, immediately got into touch with them and saw to it that they were re-equipped and brought up to strength as far as possible. At their request they also received some heavy artillery. We were able to supply them only with a Landwehr battalion which had old field-howitzers. They were very heavy for the bad roads. But the value of heavy artillery was estimated so highly that all difficulties were overcome. The mobility of artillery is often sacrificed to an excessive regard for the cost of employing it.

The achievements of the Landwehr Corps may be looked back upon with pride by all who took part in them. They afford conclusive proof of the high quality of our army, the perfection of its organization, and the remarkable value of the training and education of our soldiers before the war. These things enabled us in increasing measure to conduct the war in the East with Landwehr and Landsturm formations.

### III

The advance north of the upper Vistula began on September 28.

The First Austrian Army wheeled to the right toward the lower Nida and advanced against the Sandomir-Opatow line.

The different units of the Ninth Army received the following instructions for the advance:

Landwehr Corps, on the Proschowitz-Pintschow-Opatow line.

11th Army Corps, Jendrtscheiev-Lagow.

Guard Reserve Corps, Chentziny, Kielce, Ostrowiec.

20th Army Corps, Vloszezowo, Bschin. Ilsha.

17th Army Corps, Novo Radomsk, Konsk-Radom.

35th Reserve Division, Petrikov to Tomaschow.

8th Cavalry Division and Count von Bredow's Landwehr Division, in the general direction of Kolin-szki, to the east of Lodz.

No further news of the enemy had been received, and at the start he did not offer any resistance, but retreated before our advance.

Headquarters went to Wolbrom, then to Miechow and Jendrtscheiev. Wolbrom was only a factory; the two places had all the characteristics of the small, dirty Polish towns. Bugs were all in the day's work. At Miechow we were very near the front. Cossack patrols were reconnoitering in the neighborhood, and General von Woyrsch, who reported to General von Hindenburg, had to make a detour to avoid them.

At Kielce we had decent quarters again, with good rooms for offices, and that made the work easier.

The strain to which our troops were subjected during the advance was enormous. The roads were mere mud and the weather bad. In spite of this, very long marches of thirty kilometers and more had to be accomplished if the enemy was to be caught crossing the Vistula or held on the far bank.

Each day made it more clear to me that our plan of operations must be for the Austro-Hungarian Army to seek a decision south of the Vistula, relieve Przemyśl and cross the San, while the group to the north of the Vistula held back somewhat. This would be possible only if the enemy were retired behind the Vistula. If he chose to make a strong stand on the west bank,



as he might do at any moment, we should be too weak to resist him successfully. We perfected this plan during and after the conference at Neu Sandec. It had to be altered, both in scope and details. This campaign is distinguished by more vicissitudes than any other, and therefore deserves one of the first places in the annals of war.

Each day presented the Headquarters Staff with some fresh, difficult problem. The subordinate commanders had to act on their own responsibility. It was a bold plunge into the unknown, and meant hard fighting and cautious withdrawals. Our weak forces were separated by long distances. But all were governed by the same clear, determined aim.

The movements of the troops depended to a great extent on the next step. The indescribable state of the roads and the bad weather were extremely unfavorable conditions for us. Even the great highroad from Cracow to Warsaw was knee-deep. It had a layer of mud a foot high. The work required for restoring the roads was enormous and labor was scarce. The troops and road-mending companies worked indefatigably and accomplished a great deal. When we returned, in the latter half of October, the roads had a totally different aspect. We had done a great work for civilization.

The conditions on the railway were equally difficult. The Kielce line, the most important from our point of view, passed through the Miechow tunnel, which had been destroyed. A firm had already been commissioned to restore it, and the work was proceeding quickly, considering the conditions. This tunnel had a history.

In November it was destroyed by us. Then the Russians rebuilt it, but they destroyed it again in the summer of 1915; thereupon we repaired it once and for all.

There were other extensive works to be carried out, as, for example, the conversion of the wide Russian gage to the normal gage, and the building of numerous bridges. Wonderful feats were accomplished. The railway to Kielce, and later to Radom, was ready considerably sooner than I anticipated. The extension of the second, Vienna-Warsaw line, which was already normal gage, from Czestochova through Novo Radomsk, in the direction of Koliuschki Station, was begun and speedily finished. We were also successful in re-establishing several branch lines. But we were not able to complete the bridge near Sieradz on the Kalisz-Lodz line, and in that way secure through communication between the Polish and German railways in the west.

Thanks to the untiring work of several men on my staff, Major Drechsel and Captains von Waldow and Sperr, the communications with the rear were soon in shipshape order. All difficulties were overcome so promptly that operations did not suffer at all.

The demands for technical material for purposes of communication were heavier than in East Prussia. The Russians had destroyed the few existing telegraph wires and cut down the poles. A few field-telegraph wires were laid, and we had to manage as best we could with these. We were not then so spoiled as we became later, after the establishment of the trench telegraph system in the war of positions. The safest means of communication were motor-cars and despatch-riders, the latter in relays. The few wireless stations did good service. Here again I was always successful in getting a grasp of the situation and transmitting orders in time.

The inhabitants gave us no trouble. They were docile and did not resist the measures we took. The idea of calling them up for service against the Russians, which had frequently been mooted, proved imprac-

licable. The so-called Polish legion of the Austrian Army was mostly composed of Galician Poles, who were liable to service in that army. Only later was the full meaning of this brought home to me.

#### IV

On October 4 the main forces of the Austrian Army, the First, Third, and Fourth Armies, began the forward movement; on the 5th they crossed the Wislok. The Russians offered no serious resistance. By the 9th the Austrian forces had reached the river San, and forced their way into Przemyśl.

Also on October 4 the Austrian First Army and the right wing of the Ninth Army were engaged with Russian rifle brigades near Klimintof and Opatoff, which were let off very lightly. The First Austrian Army now shifted its center of gravity to Sandomir, while the right wing of the Ninth Army continued its advance toward the Vistula above its confluence with the San.

The 20th Army Corps reached the region northwest of Kielce, and the 17th Army Corps, after a slight engagement, reached Radom and concentrated there. General von Frommel's Corps had reached the Tomaschow-Koliuschki Station line, and the 8th Cavalry Division was somewhere near Rawa. Between Kalisz and Thorn our frontier-defense troops slowly pushed their way into Poland. We also used them on our line of communications.

Meanwhile we were receiving continuous reports that the Siberian Army Corps were being detrained at Warsaw, and that strong forces were pushing along the right bank of the Vistula north of its junction with the San. We had an impression that great enemy preparations were being made against the Ninth Army. This confirmed me in my view of our own plans. We had

to win and hold the Vistula line while the Austrian Army obtained a definite decision by attacking and defeating the Russians on the San.

In particular, our first task was to reach the prospective crossing-places between the confluence of the San and Ivangorod, and to isolate and, if luck was with us, seize the bridge-head on the near side of the fortress. Then we were to watch the line of the Vistula between Ivangorod and Warsaw. Finally, we had to strike a blow at the Siberian Army Corps assembling south of Warsaw and, in so doing, invest, and if possible capture, the fortress.

The Ninth Army alone was too weak to carry out these numerous tasks. The Austrian First Army would have to be called on, too, and be brought up considerably farther north.

The Ninth Army was now deflected sharply northward.

The 17th Army Corps, under General von Mackensen, received orders to advance on Warsaw.

General von Frommel's group was put under his orders.

The 20th Army Corps was to watch Ivangorod, and prevent any crossing of the Vistula north of the fortress.

The Guard Reserve Corps received similar instructions with regard to the crossings of the Vistula south of the fortress up to Novo Alexandria, inclusive.

The Landwehr Corps was to hold the Vistula line south of this point.

The 11th Army Corps was incorporated in the Austrian First Army in order to stiffen it. It was to hold the Vistula line south to Annopol, and attempt a crossing itself if and when the San had been crossed farther south. General von Conrad placed two cavalry divisions at our disposal, of which the 3d was placed under

the command of the 20th Army Corps for observation work on the Vistula, and the 7th attached to General von Frommel's Corps.

While these measures were being carried out, severe fighting took place at various points.

The 17th Army Corps swerved sharply to the left from Radom through Bialobrshegi, and as early as October 9 encountered Siberian troops, who were concentrating at and to the east of Grojec. After heavy fighting the enemy was thrown back on Warsaw. General von Mackensen followed close on his heels and drew General von Frommel in on his left flank. Early on the 12th he was close to the south side of the fortress.

On the battle-field of the 9th, an order was found on the body of a dead or wounded Russian officer which gave us information of the greatest importance.

One brigade of the 20th Army Corps engaged the enemy near Kosjenice, north of Ivangorod, where he had crossed with weak forces. It was not successful in driving him back.

The Guard Reserve Corps attacked hostile forces which had effected a crossing near Novo Alexandria, and threw them back over the Vistula after very severe fighting in which the Landwehr Corps took part.

Farther to the south. the Russians had not yet crossed the Vistula.

Our headquarters were at Radom.

## V

The army order found near Grojec gave us a clear picture of the enemy's intentions. The Grand Duke's plan of operations was conceived on a grand scale, exceedingly dangerous from our point of view. Far more than thirty Russian corps, densely massed to

the right, were to sweep over the Vistula between Warsaw and the confluence of the San, which was itself to be crossed farther south by other forces. Five divisions of Mackensen's group had to deal unaided with fourteen hostile divisions. The Grand Duke projected a strong encircling movement from the north against the Ninth Army, combined with a simultaneous frontal attack against it and the Austrian armies, while he held the heights east of Przemyśl with his left wing. To carry out this operation the Grand Duke drew on part of Rennenkampf's army also. If this plan succeeded, the victory of Russia, on which the Entente had counted in its strategical calculations, was assured.

I had not yet given up hope that the Austrian Army would beat the Russians east of Przemyśl and cross the San. Yet the forces holding the line north of the confluence of the San needed some, though not necessarily large, reinforcements, and further concentration toward Warsaw and Ivangorod was imperative.

At the same time the Landsturm of the 5th, 11th, and 17th Army Corps, which had marched into north-west Poland, were brought forward to the lower Bzura.

The communications in our rear were subjected to a special examination, for a retreat might only too easily be necessary. Preparations were made for the destruction of the railways, among other things, by placing in readiness an immense amount of explosives.

While from October 15 General von Mackensen was defending himself south of Warsaw against strong enemy attacks, the Russians attempted again and again to cross the Vistula farther south. It was found necessary to push forward the 37th Infantry Division of the 20th Army Corps to Kalvaria. This division prevented the river from being crossed at this point, but the enemy corps, which had managed to place some of its units on the left bank, came out of the engage-

ment without serious losses. The division remained in that neighborhood and was also placed under General von Mackensen's command.

The 41st Infantry Division and the Austrian 3d Cavalry Divisions were posted at the mouth of the Pilica and southward to Kosjenice.

The Guard Reserve Corps had taken over the investment of Ivangorod. This corps attempted to throw back the enemy forces which were still on the left bank of the Vistula near Kosjenice, and in this task received assistance from a brigade of the 11th Army Corps, which had been placed at its disposal by the army command.

I shall never forget the battle near Kosjenice. What actually happened was that four brigades were taken into the narrow bend of the Vistula, which had become a swamp, owing to heavy rain. The brigade in front of Ivangorod had been thrown back by a strong Russian sortie. I was afraid that the Russian attack might strike into the flank of those four brigades, which were very cramped in their defense, as they had no room to maneuver. I did not sleep a wink that night. The next morning the position before Ivangorod did not appear so dangerous. As the Russians attacked, the fighting in the marshes near Kosjenice continued. All the troops who participated in these engagements look back on them with horror.

In consequence of the northerly march of the Guard Reserve Corps the Landwehr Corps had taken over the duty of watching the crossing near Novo Alexandria.

While the battle at Kosjenice was in full swing I received an aeroplane report that strong enemy forces had crossed the Vistula south of Ivangorod also. If this were the fact our position would have been exceedingly serious. The army command had no reserves of any kind at its disposal; everything had been

thrown in. It was lucky for us that this report proved false. The aviator had wrongly identified the battlefield near Kosjenice as lying south of Ivangorod.

Nothing particular was reported from the Landwehr Corps. The Russians had been prevented from throwing a bridge across the river at Kasimierz, south of Novo Alexandria, and higher up the enemy was awaiting events.

Our plan of securing the line of the Vistula had succeeded, but Warsaw and Ivangorod still remained in the hands of the enemy, and he had effected a crossing, though a bad one, at Kosjenice, north of Ivangorod.

## VI

The Austrian Army to the south of the Vistula had not succeeded in crossing the river San, or gaining any ground east of Przemyśl. General von Conrad was none the less still hopeful of success.

The longer the decision south of the river San was delayed the more urgent became the need of reinforcing the left wing of the Ninth Army, in view of its increasingly critical situation. This question of reinforcement was closely affected by events on the San. If progress were made there, we could stand a few setbacks near Warsaw; if not, we should be crushed there.

The arrival of reinforcements would save the situation for a while; but reinforcements were not to be obtained from General Headquarters, for they had sent the newly formed army corps to Ypres, and the 15th Reserve Corps to East Prussia, where the situation had become more serious.

The army command proposed that the Guard Reserve, the Landwehr, and the 11th Army Corps, defending the line of the Vistula, should be relieved by Austrian troops and brought up north; or, better still,



that Austrian troops should be employed to reinforce our left wing, in which case the German troops which were by now familiar with the Vistula sector could stay there, thus guaranteeing the safety of the Vistula line. Besides, these relief operations would take up precious time, and the situation permitted of no delay.

General von Conrad was also convinced of the necessity of reinforcing the battle-line north of the river Pilica, but he most emphatically vetoed the utilization of Austrian troops, with the exception of two cavalry divisions. We approached General Headquarters and His Majesty the Kaiser approached the Emperor Franz Joseph, who returned a favorable reply; but the Austrian High Command held to its views, and the relief of the three Prussian corps was ordered.

By General von Conrad's orders, the exchange was to be carried out by parts of the First Army, in front of Ivangorod, in such a way as to leave the crossings open. The Austrian troops were then to throw the pursuing Russians back into the Vistula. We strongly opposed the plan, but Fate was to take its course.

The Austrian infantry divisions of the First Army which were to relieve the Landwehr Corps and the Guard Reserve Corps on the Vistula came up slowly. The relief of all the units could not be accomplished before the 20th. In the mean while the situation before Warsaw had reached a point at which a decision was urgently called for. The enemy's enveloping movement became more obvious from day to day, and his pressure round Novo Georgievsk and Warsaw was continually increasing.

A period of intense anxiety and apprehension began. To accept battle would have been too dangerous. It became evident that an hour would soon come when General von Mackensen and his group would have to be withdrawn from in front of Warsaw. But this

would have to be done neither too early nor too late. It was indeed a difficult decision. What would the country say?

On the evening of October 17 I considered that the moment had arrived to order the retirement. I asked Field-Marshal von Hindenburg to withdraw General von Mackensen's group from Warsaw west-southwest to the Rawa-Skierniowice-Lowicz line. There was hope that there would just be time to bring the relieved Landwehr Corps into line north of the Pilica between Novo Miassto and Rawa. By these movements a new front would have been offered to the Russian attack. It is true that its left wing would have been only insufficiently protected by Landsturm and cavalry, but it was possible, if necessary, to withdraw it. If the Russians took the bait it was within the bounds of possibility to attack them in flank across the Pilica east of Novo-Miassto, using the 20th and the 11th Army Corps and the Guard Reserve Corps, which would already have been concentrated there, or could not be far away. A decision might thus be secured. By these operations we would gain time. After all, we must know some time whether the Austrian Army south of the San had been successful.

Unfortunately, this became more and more doubtful. In fact, as early as the night of October 17 it was the Russians who crossed the San, and thus did what the Austrian army had not been able to accomplish.

General von Mackensen marched away from Warsaw in the night of the 18th. The movements, which had long been prepared, were carried out in exemplary order. The enemy took no booty, and it was only after a time that he took up the pursuit vigorously.

On October 25-26 General von Mackensen, the Landwehr Corps (which had arrived in time), and the 37th Infantry Division were attacked very violently

in their new positions north of Novo Miassto. The left wing had to swing back in the direction of Lodz, and the 37th Infantry Division had to be withdrawn to the south bank of the Pilica. For the rest, we remained masters of the situation in the following days of heavy fighting. But the attack across the Pilica was outside the bounds of possibility. The Austrians suffered a great reverse near Ivangorod, and retreated to Radom.

So things had turned out as our headquarters had feared. The Austrian First Army, which had been on guard before Ivangorod since October 21, had allowed too many Russians to cross the Vistula; instead of driving the enemy back they were driven back themselves.

With the Guard Reserve Corps we did our best to prevent disaster on the Austrian left; but in vain. The Russians pressed forward from Novo Alexandria and Ivangorod and crossed the Vistula at the mouth of the Pilica also.

I learned only casually of the Austrian First Army's decision to fall back on Radom. Lieutenant-Colonel Hoffman immediately entered a protest on behalf of the Guard Reserve Corps. The Austrian First Army managed to hold on for a few hours, which was something to be thankful for. Help had been sent to the Guard Reserve Corps, but an attack over the Pilica in a north-south direction was not to be thought of, as the troops protecting its right flank were giving way.

The 11th Army Corps was moved by forced marches to the region northeast of Lodz, to support the left wing of Mackensen's group.

The situation had entirely changed, owing to the Austrian Army having retired from Ivangorod to Radom. A strong forward movement on the whole of the Vistula front was to be expected from the enemy.

We doubted whether the Austrian troops would be able to resist them. South of the Vistula, too, the Austrian position had become increasingly critical. All hope of a favorable decision by force of arms had finally

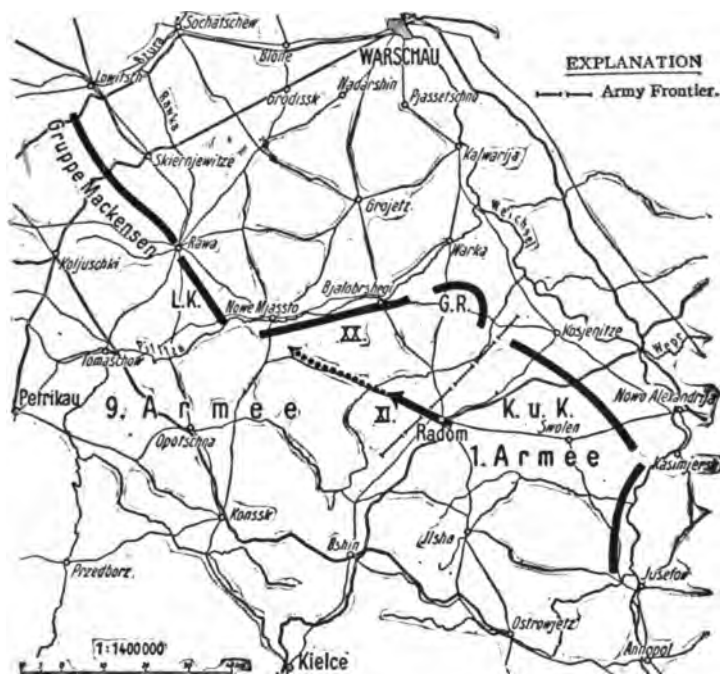


FIG. 4. THE CAMPAIGN IN POLAND. SITUATION AT THE END OF OCTOBER 1914, AFTER THE RETREAT FROM WARSAW

vanished. If the Ninth Army stood where it was it would ultimately be surrounded and defeated. The destruction of the Austrian Army would then follow as a matter of course. The Ninth Army had to be withdrawn in order to be able to operate again. It was clear that this movement would affect the Austrian troops, but the Russian attacks would have compelled them to retire in any case.

The subsequent Austro-Hungarian claim that their army had retired because the Ninth Army was withdrawn is both true and untrue. It conceals the fact that the retirement of the Ninth Army was solely due to the breakdown of the Austrian Army, which had fought so gallantly at the beginning of the war, but had not yet recovered from the effects of the battle of Lemberg.

## VII

The order for the retreat, which had entered the sphere of probability for some time, was issued on the 27th. The situation was highly critical. The operations in October had gained us time, but had not been successful. We had now to expect that very crisis—the probable invasion of Posen, Silesia, and Moravia by Russian armies in superior force—which should have been prevented by our concentration and advance in Upper Silesia at the end of September.

The general lines of the retirement were already familiar to the German troops. They had been instructed over and over again to send everything they could do without to the rear. On the whole, this had been done, though here and there there was more in the front lines than there should have been. The problem of getting our heavy transport over the bad roads gave me the acutest anxiety.

The retirement was to be carried out in a direct westerly direction if possible, thereby escaping the enemy's enveloping movement.

On the whole, our "strategic retreat," as it was christened by the soldiers, was carried out according to plan and in perfect order. The countryside was spared. The retreat will be for all time an example of safe and humane warfare.

The Guards Reserve Corps had a hard time of it

on the right wing, for the resistance of the Austrian First Army was crumbling steadily, and it kept yielding to the enemy's frontal attacks.

The Austrian armies retired on both sides of the Vistula till they were on a level with Cracow, and part of their forces found themselves right in the Carpathians southwest of Przemysl.

Of the Ninth Army the following units had to retreat:

The Guard Reserve Corps, 20th Army Corps, and Landwehr Corps, past the Kielce-Tomaschow line, halfway to the Cracow-Czestochova line north of Czestochova.

The 17th Army Corps and General von Frommel's Corps, past the Petrikau-Lodz line, and join hands with the Landwehr Corps at Wielun.

Positions had been prepared round Czestochova and Wielun.

The 11th Army Corps, which withdrew southwest of Sieradz.

Between the rivers Prosna and Warta, the 5th Cavalry Division, which had come from the Western front, the 8th Cavalry Division, and the 7th Austrian Cavalry Division were concentrating under General von Frommel, who now gave up his command of the 35th Reserve Division and Count von Bredow's Landwehr Division.

The Landsturm formations went back to the Kalisz-Wreschen-Thorn line.

The Russians followed at full strength. They also attacked us very heavily in East Prussia and near Mlawa. The position became very serious. We longed for an opportunity of resuming the offensive, but with the Austrian Army so near, such an operation would have been very hazardous, and, in any case, the offensive could only have been a frontal attack. We should only have failed.

A great decision had now to be made. I was more and more convinced that our only course was to send a large part of the army round by rail to Hohensalza and Thorn, and from there bring it down along the Vistula in the Lodz-Lowicz direction, so that it could fall on the flank of the Russians and bring their advance to a standstill. What forces could be spared for this operation was a further question.

Our first business was to delay the Russians as long as possible and keep them away from the German railways. The destruction of railways and roads had been prepared for in a very wholesale manner. Experience had taught us that a modern army cannot operate more than one hundred and twenty kilometers from its rail-heads. If this be true, and we were able to destroy the railways as thoroughly as I hoped, we could count on bringing the Russian masses to a temporary standstill, even without fighting, before they reached our frontier. In spite of all our preparations, it was not an easy matter to carry out the destruction of the railways, for the troops were always wanting to defer the operation. But there was no help for it. I gave the orders and saw that they were carried out. Captain Sperr assisted me splendidly. Without more ado the troops demolished the road bridges. An immense amount of work was accomplished.

I had the satisfaction of seeing that enemy advance gradually slow down, and actually come to a standstill at the very distance I have mentioned, and this though we had left behind large stores, the destruction of which I had forbidden.

#### VIII

At the end of October General von Falkenhayn summoned me to Berlin. General von Conrad had sug-

gested to him that large forces from the West should be sent to the Eastern front. General von Falkenhayn spoke hopefully of the attack near Ypres and wanted to defer further decisions. I was not able to give him precise information as to the plans of our staff. Nothing had yet been decided.

In Berlin I felt that I was in another world. The difference between the immense strain under which I had been living since the beginning of the war and the way of life in Berlin was too great. The passion for amusement and pleasure reigned supreme. People did not seem to realize the seriousness of our position in the war. I was unpleasantly impressed and felt like a stranger. I was glad to get back to Czestochova and the friendly circle of my comrades.

On the morning of November 3 I was convinced that our situation must be handled differently altogether. I asked General von Hindenburg to agree to a plan which had been previously discussed, of taking our forces round by Hohensalza. Orders to this effect were immediately given, and we informed General Headquarters of this decision.

General Headquarters had watched the development of events in the East with the greatest concern.

The situation round Mława and on the east frontier of East Prussia became more perilous every day. The newly formed 25th Reserve Corps, which had been sent to East Prussia as reinforcements, had fought heroically. But it soon became apparent that the fighting value of the new formations was far below that of units composed of men who had had long service with the colors and were commanded by young and active officers. These new formations had wonderful manhood in their rank and file, but they were not as yet real soldiers. Their courage and devotion did not make up for their lack of training. Further, the large



number of reserve officers who found fresh employment in these new formations did their level best, but also, too, lacked experience. There were exceptions, of course.

An army is not made in a few weeks—long training and tradition are required. Proof of this is provided by the example of English and American troops. They, too, have had to pay very heavily for their intrepidity. The 25th Reserve Corps had not been able to effect any appreciable change in the situation on the frontiers of East Prussia.

It was now to be expected that the Grand Duke, with his enormously superior forces, would not only make a decisive attempt to drive Germany and Austria out of the bend of the Vistula, but also directly invade Germany east of the Vistula and try to secure a decision, or at least prevent us from moving our troops about.

On the whole eastern frontier of the kingdom of Prussia battles would soon be in progress which would obviously act and react closely upon one another. A strong single command was called for. This question had already been discussed at the time of my meeting with General von Falkenhayn in Berlin. On November 1 His Majesty appointed General von Hindenburg Commander-in-chief in the East, at the same time relieving him of his position as commander of the Ninth Army. At our suggestion, General von Mackensen was given this post. I remained Chief of Staff to General von Hindenburg. The majority of my colleagues were attached to this new staff.

The sphere of command of the Commander-in-chief in the East now extended definitely over the Eighth and Ninth Armies, and the staffs of the 1st, 20th, 17th, 2d, 5th, and 6th Army Corps in the provinces of East and West Prussia, Pomerania, Posen, and Silesia, and the fortresses situated there.

Subsequently Zastrow's Corps on the Soldau-Mlawa line, now under the orders of the Eighth Army Headquarters, was brought under the direct command of the Commander-in-chief in the East.

This linking up of the commands turned out well. It relieved the Commander-in-chief of the details of army command in the field. All the same, there were occasions when it was necessary to encroach on the jurisdiction of the army staffs by means of direct orders to their commanders. This did not much like intervening in this way, and at first perhaps I did so less than I should. I hope I hit on the right course later on.

The headquarters of the Commander-in-chief in the East were moved to Posen. We had our quarters in the Royal Palace, and remained there until the beginning of February 1915. This was a particularly harassing and busy time. Here began that regular way of life which I led until my resignation.

## IX

All of us at General Headquarters were thoroughly imbued with a sense of our enormous responsibility, and had no illusions as to what was at stake. In Posen it was easier than in Poland to feel the pulse of the country and realize its fear of a hostile invasion with all its terrible consequences. We could not even help aggravating that fear by our military measures. The issue of the imminent battles was uncertain. The Russian superiority in numbers was great, our troops were much exhausted, and our allies had but little fighting strength left.

From the frontier provinces the youths capable of bearing arms were removed. Strategical positions were reconnoitered and orders given for their construction. The mines in several districts of Poland had already

been rendered unworkable, and measures were now taken for the demolition of the German railways and mines in the frontier districts. The commander of the 6th Corps, in response to my request, had approached several mining experts in his province, and asked their advice as to the best method of destroying the mines in Upper Silesia. The execution of the necessary measures was now decided on. Terror at once spread through the province. I had to make it impossible for the Russians to use the mines for a long time. Military interests made it imperative. Later on in the war the English destroyed the Rumanian oil-fields even more ruthlessly. Coal is of equally vital importance for waging war. As it happened, the opinion of a higher authority was taken, and it proved possible to modify the scheme of destruction somewhat.

The attitude of the Polish inhabitants of our frontier provinces was not conciliatory. They were very reserved and aloof. No clear-sighted man could have expected anything different.

In view of our inferiority in numbers, it was very important for the approaching decision that we should draw on the Prussian eastern fortresses and the various attached corps under our command for all such available troops and war material as could be utilized for active operations in the field. We had made a start with this system as far back as August 1914, and in course of time we were able to form as large a number of divisions in the East out of Landsturm, Landwehr, and former fortress troops as General von Moltke had at his disposal for the battle of Königgrätz. Later, these divisions were given numbers, just like the active divisions, but this did not change their special character. Of course, the demands made on these divisions, especially as regards fighting and

marching, were not the same as those required of units composed of younger men, but in times of great stress it was often impossible to give them special treatment. These troops did more than could reasonably be expected of them. They gave of their best in defense of hearth and home, wife and child.

The Eighth Army, on the eastern frontiers of Prussia, had gradually been able to form several Landwehr divisions. From the garrisons of the Vistula fortresses and the Landsturm a frontier defense corps had been formed, comprising the Zastrow Corps, two divisions strong, which subsequently became the 17th Reserve Corps. The fortress of Thorn, which had its first Main Reserve—the 35th Reserve Division—in the line near Czeszochowa, gradually formed a new main reserve—known as Von Dickhuth's Corps. This corps was subsequently employed on the right bank of the Vistula in the direction of Plock. The main reserve of Thorn was now Von Westernhagen's Landsturm Brigade, which had been brought up to the Bzura, and withdrawn to Wlozlawek during the retreat of the Ninth Army.

The fortress of Posen also had given us one main reserve, which had formed part of General von Frommel's Corps, and been brilliantly led by General Count von Bredow in the campaign in Poland. His Landwehr had no field kitchens; they attacked the Russians with the idea of procuring some—and got them. The fortress and province of Posen now produced further forces. The Posen Corps, which was concentrated round Kalisz, was a very strong division, and had been equipped with great care. The Governor of Posen, General von Koch, and his Chief of Staff, Colonel Marquard, took the greatest trouble in the matter.

The Headquarters Staff of the 6th Army Corps was to form the Breslau Corps for frontier defense east of

Kempen. It was a long time before this was done and the corps was fit for the line.

Major von Bockelberg distinguished himself by the help he gave me in building up these new formations.

## X

The more I thought about the problem ahead of us, and realized the position and our fearful peril, the firmer was my resolution, if possible, to turn the Czesochowa operations into an overwhelming and annihilating blow. That alone could definitely save us. It was not enough to bring the enemy merely to a standstill. The idea was not a sudden inspiration, but had been slowly forming in my mind.

Such troops as the Commander-in-chief in the East could spare were assembled for the advance between Wreschen and Thorn. General von Conrad, with his soldierly insight, gave us all possible assistance.

The Eighth Army had been weakened and could no longer fulfil the task of covering the eastern frontier of East Prussia. This army found operative support both in the newly constructed positions between Lakes Spirding and Mauer and the fortified line of the river Angerapp. The army successively surrendered its very exhausted 25th Reserve Corps, of whose condition we learned only later, and the 1st Reserve Corps, with the 1st and 36th Reserve Divisions. These troops were sent to Thorn, in the direction of the Lodz-Wlozlawek line. The commander of the Eighth Army, General Otto von Below, had now to husband his resources carefully, in order to be able to hold the positions which he might have to occupy in an emergency. It had to be done, even though the performance of this task made exceptional demands upon both commanders and men.

The Zastrow Corps received orders to hold fast at Soldau, for the existence of the Eighth Army and the fate of East Prussia depended on it.

It would have been particularly useful if we could have strengthened this front. A strong attack from Mława against the Narew front between Roshan and Pultusk would have been the most effective support for the operations on the left bank of the Vistula. But we had to limit our aims, for the success of the flank attack on the left bank had to be assured. Otherwise our resources would merely have been dissipated. It was as much as we could do if we managed to strengthen Zastrow's Corps sufficiently for it to constitute a certain threat to North Poland, and lead the enemy to believe, if only for a short time, that an offensive here was really intended. Strong Russian forces were concentrated north of Novo Georgievsk. It was important for the battle on the left bank of the Vistula that they should be held there.

The Westernhagen Brigade and, later, a portion of the new main reserve from Thorn, were available for the forward movement up the right bank of the Vistula. We had thought of sending them up toward Plock, so as to convey a false impression in conjunction with Zastrow's Corps. Once in Plock, it was possible to bring them over and use them in the battle on the left side of the Vistula.

The headquarters of the Ninth Army went to Hohensalza.

Those units of the Eighth Army intended for Thorn, the 1st and the 25th Reserve Corps, were to be put under the command of the Ninth Army.

The 20th Army Corps and the 3d Guard Division, which had come up from Upper Silesia, were detrained south of Hohensalza, and the 17th Army Corps near Gnesen.

Von Richthofen's Cavalry Corps, with the 6th and 9th Cavalry Divisions, which had come from the West, were concentrated at the same place

The 11th Army Corps was marched on German territory through Ostrowo to the neighborhood of Wreschen.

General von Frommel's Cavalry Corps had skirmishes with Russian cavalry between the rivers Prosna and Warta, east of Kalisz, and formed a screen behind which the Posen Corps took up its positions.

The Landsturm, which joined the Breslau Corps later, held the line, a very thin one, almost up to about Wielun. From there to half-way to the Czestochova-Cracow line was General von Woyrsch, with the 35th Reserve Division, Count von Bredow's Landwehr Division, the Landwehr Corps, and the Guard Reserve Corps, minus the 3d Guard Division. At this point they joined hands with the Austrian First Army, whose front extended to the Vistula. South of the river to the Carpathians stretched the rest of the allied army, once more closely concentrated, and stronger forces were posted in the mountains for the protection of Hungary.

From this survey it will be seen that the actual blow against the enemy's flank could be carried out with but five and a half corps. Our forces for dealing with the enemy front from the point at which the Warta flows into German territory southward to the region of Czestochova were quite inadequate. General von Woyrsch was told to act in conjunction with the Austrian Army. Whether the Austrians could take the offensive was still uncertain. Opinions on that point were once more very pessimistic.

To the question whether the Austrian First Army would be able to resist the impending hostile attack we received the answer that it would certainly be in

a position to do so for twenty-four hours. The attack never took place. It was again greatly to General von Conrad's credit that he raised the morale of the army and revived the spirit of the offensive. But he would never have done it without German support.

We had intended to bring a considerable part of Von Woyrsch's army up north to add weight to the flank attack and strengthen our line. But General von Conrad offered strong objection to this idea, and so only the 3d Guard Division was brought to Hohen-salza to support the shock troops of the Ninth Army.

General von Conrad railed General von Boehm-Ermolli with four infantry and two or three cavalry divisions round from the Carpathians, through Upper Silesia, to the north side of Czestochova.

In order to meet the wishes of General von Conrad, General von Woyrsch and his troops were placed under the Austrian High Command.

After the arrival of the Austrian troops, the Breslau Corps, still in process of formation, could be concentrated a little more. Of course these measures resulted in a certain stiffening of the front from the middle of November, but we were still too weak to deliver a heavy blow.

It was claimed later that the Austro-Hungarian Army had defended Upper Silesia. In reality it was defending its own homes, also north of Czestochova.

It was natural that in this situation our eyes should again turn to the West. I asked myself whether there was any chance of obtaining a success at Ypres, or whether it would not be better once and for all to restrict operations on the Western front to a defensive, and carry out the contemplated operations against Russia with all our available forces. General von Conrad had suggested this in November.

This point of view seemed to me to be the right one,



and I asked our High Command for reinforcements from the West. In addition to the two cavalry divisions, the despatch of further forces was contemplated; but these arrived too late and at odd times. The operation on the flank could attain a military decision only if carried out as a surprise—that is, with speed, great concentration of force, and in conjunction with a strong frontal attack. We dared not delay the beginning of operations in the East, even if we had seen our way absolutely clear as regards reinforcements on November 10.

The troops which came from the Western front had suffered so heavily in the fighting there that they were really no more fit for battle than the Eastern troops. The complete contrast between the conditions in the Polish theater of war and those in the West must, necessarily, have affected them adversely at first.

On the question whether, in view of the reinforcements sent to us from the West, something else could or should have been done, I cannot express an opinion without knowledge of other factors. For that reason I am unwilling to offer any criticism. I have always held the view (even when I was a lecturer at the *Kriegsakademie*) that any criticism not founded on actual knowledge only reflects on the critics.

Shortly after the arrival of Von Richthofen's Cavalry Corps, which turned up just in time for the advance, Von Hollen's Cavalry Corps and the 2d and 4th Cavalry Divisions appeared. They were attached to Zastrow's Corps.

Later, but only after the forward movement had begun, the following units were assigned to us: the 3d Reserve Corps, under General von Beseler, with the 5th and 6th Reserve Divisions; the 13th Army Corps, under General von Fabeck, with the 26th Infantry Division and 25th Reserve Division; the 2d Army

Corps, under General von Linsingen, with the 3d and 4th Infantry Divisions, and the 24th Reserve Corps, under General von Gerok, with the 47th and 48th Reserve Divisions. These were posted according to the requirements of the situation.

The means at our disposal at the beginning of operations on November 10 were imperfect, but in spite of that, an attempt had to be made to deal the Russians such a blow as would not only bring their armies in the bend of the Vistula to a standstill once and for all, and so put an end to their offensive, but crush them decisively.

This would be accomplished, if we were able to force them back from Warsaw. If we were too weak to do this, we must content ourselves with the lesser result, and even that would be of great importance.

## XI

In November fighting developed as anticipated. The Russian armies everywhere started upon the execution of the great tasks set them by the Grand Duke.

The Eighth Army found itself attacked. Even though it had been depleted of the 1st and 25th Reserve Corps, it made an attempt to hold the east frontier of East Prussia against the overwhelming Russian assaults, but it was not able to do so permanently. Toward the middle of November we withdrew it to the Masurian Lakes-river Angerapp position.

Thus the eastern part of East Prussia was once more exposed to a Russian invasion. A period of great suffering was in store for it, but, although this was to be foreseen, the reduction of the Eighth Army was a necessary evil. The Russians followed close upon our heels and also attacked us in our new positions. In spite of all this we decided to bring the 1st Infantry

Division of the Ninth Army up to join in the fighting, west of the Vistula. We staked much in order to attain our objective at this most important point.

Zastrow's Corps was assailed in its positions between Mława and Prasnysz and found itself forced to retire to the Soldau-Neidenburg line. Here the advance of the enemy was checked after heavy fighting. The whole situation east of the Vistula seemed gravely imperiled, and West Prussia, in particular, was immediately threatened, but Zastrow's Corps did its duty. We lived through many an anxious hour in Posen, but the arrival, in the middle of November, of Von Hollen's Cavalry Corps on both wings improved the situation.

Von Westernhagen's Landsturm Brigade reached Plock, and, later on, was brought over to the left bank of the Vistula.

In the mean time the deployment of the Ninth Army had been carried out and completed according to plan. The railways had met the demands made upon them. As early as the evening of November 10, the army stood in readiness for the forward movement:

The 25th and 1st Reserve Corps south of Thorn.  
Direction of advance, Wlozlawek-Lowicz.

Von Richthofen's Cavalry Corps, 20th Army Corps, and 3d Guard Division, south of Hohensalza, with orders to march on Kutno.

17th Army Corps southeast of Gnesen, march-direction Lentschytza.

11th Army Corps east of Wreschen, march-direction Kolo-Dobie.

Von Frommel's Cavalry Corps between Unieiov and Sieradz, march-direction Lodz.

Posen Corps on the Kalisz-Sieradz line, march-direction Lask.

From the Landsturm of the Breslau Corps little was

to be expected, and the same applied to the attached Austrian Cavalry Division. Other forces were at the time not yet in position. An offensive farther south was not yet to be thought of. The idea of such a movement by General von Woyrsch alone, who had already felt strong Russian pressure, could not be considered for a moment.

In the bend of the Vistula, Wlozlawek was in the hands of the Russians, otherwise the position as far as the river Warta was somewhat obscure. Here was the First Russian Army, part of which still extended to the right bank of the Vistula. It was composed of from ten to fourteen divisions. We might certainly rely on there being from eight to ten divisions between the Vistula and the Warta. Immediately north of the Warta, strong Russian cavalry forces were pushing toward the frontier. The bulk of the Russian Army was in line from the Warta, north of Sieradz, through Novo Radomsk to the region northeast of Cracow. Other portions had arrived in Galicia on the river Dunajec and were pushing far into the Carpathians.

The hostile advance movements had come to a standstill, for the destruction of the railways had produced the intended effect. But there were now signs that a resumption of their forward movement was to be expected.

General von Mackensen began operations without delay on November 11. We could only agree with him. The Russians were taken completely by surprise, but even in the early days of our advance there was very heavy fighting, extremely expensive to both sides, near Wlozlawek, Kutno, and Dombé. The enemy was beaten everywhere.

While the main body of the Ninth Army pushed forward unceasingly on the Lodz-Koliuschki Station line, General von Morgen covered its flank north of

Lowicz with the 1st Reserve Corps. He was sorely pressed. At first he had to rely for protection on his own vigorous attacks, and then he had to meet an attack from a Russian corps which had crossed from Novo Georgievsk to the left bank of the Vistula. Thanks to the subsidiary operation near Mlawa, this movement proceeded but slowly.

The center of the Ninth Army, Von Richthofen's Cavalry Corps, the 3d Guard Division, and the 25th Reserve Corps, finally broke the resistance offered them. The army crossed the Lowicz-Lodz line, and pushed far to the south by Brsheshiny, its attention fixed on the south and west, and strove for a great success. An order from the Ninth Army, of which I also knew, to fortify a position near Skierniowice did not reach the other army. Army Headquarters was not far enough forward.

The 20th, 17th, and 9th Army Corps, which had closed up considerably, met a strong hostile force north of Lodz on the 17th, and grappled with it. Von Frommel's Cavalry Corps and the Posen Corps advanced but slowly on the east bank of the Warta.

An intercepted wireless revealed to us that the Russians thought of retreating from Lodz. Our satisfaction was great. But the strong will of the Grand Duke held his forces where they were, as we learned from a further wireless, and our disappointment was keen.

The Russian troops on the right bank of the Vistula, with the exception of certain units which were to remain near Mlawa, were ordered to cross the Vistula. It was a good thing that this operation was effected somewhat slowly; otherwise General von Morgen's position would have been made still more difficult.

The defeated Russian forces, retreating through Skierniewice to Warsaw, were concentrated due west

of the fortress, from which they were to resume their advance.

The Russian right wing concentrated round Lodz. Reinforcements from the front of the Second and Fifth Russian Armies, which were not yet involved, pushed north on Koliuschki and west of Lodz. Here they took the Eleventh Army by surprise and pressed it sorely.

The reinforced 25th Reserve Corps, under its trusty leader, General von Schäffer-Boyadel, Chief of Staff Colonel von Massow, had pushed forward far through Brsheshiny by the 22d. Portions of Von Richthofen's Cavalry Corps had neared Petrikau and Tomaschow. The infantry divisions southeast of Lodz swung round west; great things were expected. Then the situation changed.

The 25th Reserve Corps lost touch with the 20th Army Corps. The enemy near Lodz was not thrown back, but, on the other hand, pressed back the 20th Army Corps and pushed his way in between the inner wings of the two corps. The Russian forces that had been rallied west of Warsaw pushed forward without opposition from Skierniewice to Brsheshiny. The 25th Reserve Corps and the units with it were cut off, being attacked from the south by the portions of the Fifth Russian Army which was marching on Koliuschki Station.

The details of the various engagements which now developed with the 3d Guard Division, under General Litzmann, the 25th Reserve Corps, and Von Richthofen's Cavalry Corps, have been wonderfully described by Captain von Wulffen in a brochure. I can, therefore, refer to it. From enemy wireless messages we learned in Posen, far from the battle-field, how hopefully the Russians regarded the situation, how they planned the various battles, how they already exulted at the thought of capturing various German corps.

They were preparing trains in readiness for the transport of the prisoners. I cannot describe what I then felt. What was at stake? Not only the triumph of the enemy and the capture of so many brave men, but nothing less than a lost campaign. After this defeat, the Ninth Army would have had to be withdrawn. What would then have been the position at the end of 1914?

The Brsheshiny episode closed with a brilliant feat of arms. The surrounded German troops broke through northward on the night of November 24. They took with them 10,000 prisoners and many captured guns.

The units that broke through were posted between the 20th Army Corps and the 1st Reserve Corps. In this way our front was made much more dense, and when the Russians assaulted it in force it was in vain. The great aim of our operations (the destruction of the Russians in the bend of the Vistula) had not been attained, as we had not proved strong enough for that purpose.

In the mean time, General von Conrad had given orders that the army under Boehm-Ermolli, Von Woyrsch's force, and the Austrian armies south of Cracow should advance on November 17. This action resulted in some local successes, but soon died down and ceased to leave any strategical interest. From now on to the end of November the Russians pressed the Ninth Army severely and attacked farther south also, but without much success. At the end of November and beginning of December, when the 1st Division from the Eighth Army and the reinforcements from the West had at last arrived, I had an opportunity of resuming (temporarily) my original plan of operations. At the same time, it was a question how the enemy attacks could be held up, especially those against the 1st Reserve Corps, while these troops were being got into position.

Zastrow's Corps succeeded in taking Ciechanov and Prasnysz. The Russians had sent some troops from here to the left bank of the Vistula, but the cavalry divisions made no progress, on account of bad weather. Also the horses were not shod for the winter campaign. The enemy soon made a counter-attack, and Zastrow's Corps had again to withdraw to Mława. In the bend of the Vistula there were again a series of sanguinary conflicts. The 3d Reserve Corps and the 13th Army Corps were placed under the headquarters of the Ninth Army, and posted on its left wing. In view of the serious position of the 1st Reserve Corps, this was done immediately after each unit arrived, but no united action resulted. Perhaps I would have been wiser to propose the formation of a special army detachment, which could have been placed under the direct orders of the Commander-in-chief in the East. In this way we should have gained more direct influence on the operations.

The left wing of the Ninth Army had now been so strengthened that there was no longer cause for anxiety. It could slowly work its way toward the enemy's positions on the Bzura. But this movement was now merely in the nature of a purely frontal attack, and not an enveloping movement on bold lines. At the same time, it was possible for us to attack on the whole front down to Von Woyrsch's detachment, inclusive. The 2d Army Corps had been sent to positions east of Sieradz, and the 48th Reserve Division to reinforce that part of the front held by the Breslau Corps. At the beginning of December, the attack made by the 2d Army Corps was crowned with success and was pushed forward in the direction of Lodz. What would we not have given for this success a fortnight earlier!

The Russians evacuated Lodz on December 6 and retired behind the river Miashga. Farther south, also,



we now gained more ground owing to the enemy having weakened that part of his line in the latter half of November in order to hold Lodz.

On December 15 Lowicz was taken by our northern wing, and from our central front further local progress was recorded.

South of Cracow, the situation had become more acute. The Austro-Hungarian General Staff had urgently asked for a German Division to reinforce the Austrian front. Reluctantly we sent the 47th Reserve Division. From a purely theoretical point of view this appeared to be a mistake—and events proved that to be true. The division only just arrived in time to save the day. General von Conrad intended enveloping the Russian southern wing from the Carpathians. In order to make this plan possible, he had considerably thinned his front. In the eventful battle for Limanova and Sapanov, from December 3-14, he succeeded in beating the Russians west of the river Dunajec. It was a triumph for the Austro-Hungarian Army after the many reverses it had suffered since the beginning of the war.

Under the pressure of our progress in Poland and Galicia, the Russians fell back behind the Bzura-Rawka sector, the upper Pilica, the Nida, and the Dunajec.

The enveloping forces of General Boroewic from the Carpathians soon came upon a very superior enemy, which attacked them without hesitation. The Austro-Hungarian troops, which were trying to envelop the enemy, were forced back into the Carpathians. Here a state of affairs was developing which was destined to exercise influence of the utmost importance upon the plans for 1915.

In the bend of the Vistula some local fighting occurred, especially on the front of the Ninth Army, which ought not to have taken place. We were still

inexperienced in trench warfare. There was too much bickering. I should have pursued a bolder policy from the start. The danger was that the gain would not be commensurate with the loss. It was the duty of leadership to guard against this.

On the northern bank of the Vistula, the Russians took possession of Plock and penetrated as high up as Wlozlawek. We were able to hold the heights along the left bank of the Vistula, east of the town, from which we controlled the railway line. Here, however, the flank of the Ninth Army from the mouth of the Bzura and Wlozlawek was too long, and needed constant watching. As it happened, the Vistula did not freeze, and so no danger arose from the extended flank.

No change occurred in the situation on the southern frontiers of our country, east of the Vistula. The Eighth Army was able, on the whole, to hold its lines, though fighting was constant and severe. A breakthrough by the Russians in a section of the line between the Masurian Lakes proved merely of local importance.

On all fronts there was diligent work on the improvement of our position.

During the operations we had great trouble in getting the railway lines, which we had ourselves previously completely destroyed, into working order again. We worked now with might and main to restore them, but considerable time elapsed before the railway communications were really in order. The troops, who were everywhere exhausted, suffered much on account of this. It was particularly regrettable that we were not able to get their Christmas parcels delivered in time. This gave considerable work to the railways, for at that time these marks of affection flowed in very freely. Leave, too, could not be granted to the extent we desired.

The measures for the government of the Poles

in the occupied territory took up a great deal of time. They are now of no interest. The country had no reason to complain; even the situation compelled us to remove valuable war raw material.

We negotiated with Austria-Hungary on the questions of the new boundaries of our respective military jurisdictions. Naturally the agreements made by me in September, under other conditions, now needed alteration. Unfortunately General Headquarters and Berlin now interfered in the negotiations, probably at the instigation of Austria-Hungary. This did not help matters, as the authorities in question were not acquainted with the actual facts. But this also is now of no account. In the course of my duties I was obliged to occupy myself with a number of military-political questions which brought me more annoyance than satisfaction.

A shadow fell on the proud satisfaction with which we contemplated the development of events on the Eastern front. The Austrian Army had fought without final success in Serbia. At the end of December it had penetrated far into that country. Belgrade had been carried on December 2. Joy reigned in Austria-Hungary. Yet as early as the days of the capture of Lodz and the battle of Limanova the Austrian troops were retiring from Serbia, defeated. They were no longer a vigorous fighting instrument. At first they had underestimated their opponents, now they went to the other extreme and overestimated them. The enemy's numbers alone terrified them. That superstition, bound up with a certain feeling of impotence in the face of the adversary, the once brave army has never overcome.

We of the staff lived a harmonious life in the castle at Posen. Common cares and common glory united us. It became the custom for us to sit together awhile

after dinner at night. We used to sit at a round table on which stood a palm, the gift of Her Majesty, our Kaiserin, a true German woman upon whom I always look with the greatest admiration.

This short little hour was a relaxation for me in the midst of the almost crushing work of those four months of war.

A great battle had been fought and won. Now new affairs claimed our attention. Germany and Austria-Hungary had been saved from the Russian danger. All the Grand Duke's plans were shattered. His attack on the East Prussian frontier, his advance on the west bank of the Vistula, and, with this, all the Entente's hope of a victorious finish of the war in the year 1914, had fallen to the ground. The surrender of the eastern portion of East Prussia and of a large part of Galicia, hard as it was, was of no consequence compared to these results.

The second part of the campaign in Poland was, too, an achievement. There is little in military history that can compare with it.

Our troops, which had been constantly fighting or on the move since the beginning of August, had distinguished themselves beyond all praise. Once more they had been victorious against an enemy with nearly twice their numbers. It was only with such leaders and such men that it proved actually possible for us to translate bold plans into action against such superior forces.

Honor and perovetual remembrance to the German Army of 1914!

## THE WINTER CAMPAIGN IN MASURIA, FEBRUARY—MARCH 1915

Chief of Staff, Southern Army—The Plan of Operations—The Campaign—The Result of the Campaign—The Russian Counter-offensives—East Prussia Finally Liberated.

(Maps VII and VIII)

### I

THE 1914 campaign had not brought a decision, and I could not see how one was to be reached in 1915. At the end of the year four new army corps were formed which were to be ready in February. The experience with the new formations of the autumn 1914 had taught us our lesson. These corps were stronger than the earlier formations in that each company had a percentage of war-hardened and particularly able officers, non-com's and men. The higher positions also were well filled. Naturally I wished the four corps to be under the eastern command, in order further to maintain our pressure on the Russians and break down their resistance as far as our strength made that possible. We were planning a new hammer-blow in West Prussia. Such a blow would also have been of strategical value in the Carpathians if the Hungarian railways had been better developed in days of peace.

By the end of the year the Austro-Hungarian General Staff was already afraid that Przemyśl would fall in the spring, and anticipated an invasion of Hungary by strong hostile forces.

The Russians had in the mean time continued their attacks on General Boroëvic's army, and won the crest

of the Carpathians. General von Conrad now wanted to undertake a counter-attack himself on a large scale, and relieve Przemyśl at the same time.

I considered the reinforcement of the Austrian Army in the Carpathians necessary, in view of its internal conditions; all the more so, if the Russian Army could not be attacked vigorously at some other point. Whether it would be possible to do this in East Prussia was still questionable; it was not yet known whether those four new corps were to be placed at our disposal.

I was accordingly obliged to support the suggestion that German forces should be sent to Hungary, even though they were taken from the forces at the disposal of the Commander-in-chief in the East. The Ninth Army in Poland was packed very tight. Positions were being prepared. The war in the West had taught us that on the defensive, in a war of positions, considerably longer fronts could be allowed than had up to now been thought possible. A number of divisions could be withdrawn from the Ninth Army for use elsewhere. The idea of continuing the frontal attacks here or south of the river Pilica, which had been suggested from one quarter, I rejected.

The following units were released for the Hungarian front: the Headquarters Staff of the 2d Army Corps, the 1st Infantry Division, 48th Reserve Division, as well as a special brigade of three regiments, out of which a guard division was formed later, and the 5th Cavalry Division. At the same time, still further reserves were withdrawn for disposal by the Commander-in-chief in the East. If it were possible to carry out the offensive proposed by General von Conrad, with the help of the reinforcements in view, it would be better than mere defense.

General von Conrad, on his side, decided to reduce the number of troops on the Serbian front, as far as

conditions would allow, and send all available forces to the Carpathians. He proposed to deliver the main attack on Przemyśl with the bulk of his forces between the Uszok and Dukla Passes. East of that point the German troops, reinforced by Austrian formations, and styled the German Southern Army, under the command of General von Linsingen, a particularly far-seeing and zealous leader, were to follow the advance of the main forces on Przemyśl as right-flank echelon.

The German Southern Army was too weak to make an encircling movement possible, as that would necessarily have involved an extension far out to the Bukovina. Moreover, the railway system was not sufficient to carry out such a plan.

While these operations were being discussed I was surprised by a telegram from our General Headquarters, stating that I had been made Chief of Staff of the Southern Army.

General Field-Marshal von Hindenburg did not want to part with me. He wrote fully to His Majesty the Kaiser, asking to be allowed to retain me, and in the position I had hitherto held.

Meanwhile, as once before at Insterburg, I said good-by to the members of the staff, and entered on my new duties, convinced that I would shortly return.

On the journey through the Carpathians I had an interview in Breslau with Generals von Conrad and von Falkenhayn, when the details of the deployment and the operations were settled. In particular, the equipment of the troops was discussed. General von Conrad considered that mountain equipment was not necessary. But when, later, I arrived in the region assigned for our deployment I was thoroughly convinced of the absolute necessity of such an equipment, and lost not a moment in securing some.

We were warmly welcomed by the population of

Hungary, as we were later when we freed Transylvania. But, once we had done our duty, their gratitude soon waned. All sorts of things occurred that made life uncomfortable for our troops. The Magyars are a strong and masterful people, but they lacked understanding of the common interests of Austria-Hungary and the just wishes and needs of the numerous nationalities living in Hungary. Hungary was the stronger half of the Dual Monarchy, and misused her position to further a disastrous foreign policy on the part of the Empire against Serbia and Rumania. Unfortunately, we made no protest.

The headquarters of the staff of the Southern Army was at Munkacs. General von Linsingen and I traveled from there through the concentration area, and settled the question of its relations to the neighboring commands and the Austrian troops, who were already in position in the mountains and were to link up with the Southern Army.

The troops were insufficiently provided for, not only as regards the preparation of positions, but also shelter. Much had to be made good.

On a walk through the wooded hills I once came across a sentry. He gave me a message in some, I do not know what, foreign language. Even the Austrian officers who accompanied me could not understand him. From this incident I gained some idea of the difficulties with which this army had to contend. These difficulties were aggravated by the fact that nationalities were much mixed in the regiments in order to make them more reliable. Czech and Rumanian regiments had gone over to the enemy. Men of these nationalities were now divided among many regiments.

But these measures did no good. They lowered the inherent value of the brave Hungarian, and particu-



larly good German regiments, and aggravated the language difficulty to an extraordinary degree.

Once more, as at the time of my journey to Neu Sandec, in September 1914, I gained the impression of the complete lack of development of all the races which did not belong to the ruling nationalities. One of my journeys led through the village of Huzules. I shall never forget the poor housing conditions of this unhappy people. How different were things in Germany, thanks to the wise measures of her rulers, and how high *Kultur* and progress stood among us as compared with Austria-Hungary! When I saw those huts in Huzules I realized that this nation could not know what it was fighting for.

Austria-Hungary had been very negligent. As an allied Power we should have known how to prevent it. Had the Dual Monarchy and the Austro-Hungarian Army accomplished even half of what could properly have been expected of them, German troops need not have been brought in such masses to reinforce their fronts. In the long run we should have had more troops at our disposal for the Western front.

I admit that Austria-Hungary complained that we had failed in France in the autumn of 1914, and that she had been exposed single-handed to Russia's overwhelming numbers.

In any case it was fatal for us that we were allied with decaying states like Austria-Hungary and Turkey. A Jew in Radom once said to one of my officers that he could not understand why so strong and vital a body as Germany should ally itself with a corpse. He was right.

But Germany was not to obtain any vigorous battle allies. We even neglected to infuse any new life into our perishing allies. I got to know the condition of affairs in Austria-Hungary only in the course of the war. I had never had any opportunity previously. I was

utterly amazed. Our responsible authorities had realized that the Dual Monarchy had become the "Sick Man of Europe," but failed to draw the correct conclusions from it. We should have kept faith with her and led her, instead of binding ourselves to her and seconding her strong but one-sided policy.

My stay in Munkacs was not of long duration. At the end of January I was again in Posen in my old position. I had had an exciting time, and found that I had missed nothing of importance.

## II

Meanwhile, the Commander-in-chief in the East had been advised by General Headquarters that during the first half of February three new corps and the 21st Army Corps could be placed at his disposal for the Eastern theater of war. General Headquarters had considered that the replacement of the 21st Corps by a new corps was necessary, in view of the fact that its reserves consisted of men from Alsace-Lorraine. The untrustworthiness shown by some of the troops from the Reichsland on the West front increased as the war went on. They were, therefore, generally sent to the East. Of course this meant that many loyal Alsace-Lorraine subjects had to suffer, but it was not possible to do justice to each individual. For the 1918 offensive in France all the younger classes were withdrawn from the army in the East. This applied also to the corresponding classes of Alsace-Lorraine troops, and gave rise to complaints from some of the men. On the Eastern front the Alsace-Lorraine troops fought excellently, and the 21st Corps even with distinction.

It had been arranged with General Headquarters that as soon as the four corps were detrained they

should be concentrated for a blow at the Russian forces facing the Eighth Army. The experience of Tannenberg and the battle of the Masurian Lakes had shown us that a great and rapid success in battle was to be obtained only when the enemy was attacked on two sides. We now had the possibility of carrying out two enveloping movements, one from the Tilsit-Wladislawow-Kalvaria direction, with a strong group of three corps (which were to be assembled between the Niemen and the road from Insterburg to Gumbinnen), and another with the 40th Reserve Corps, to which the 2d Infantry Division and the 4th Cavalry Division were attached, between Lake Spirding and the frontier from the direction of Bialla-Raigrod-Augustovo and the south. Simultaneously, the enemy was to be pinned down by a frontal attack.

Both our opponent's wings were weak. We could hope to gain a lot of ground before the enemy main forces could get away from our frontal attack. Both our thrusting wings were to surround the enemy—the earlier the better.

If we succeeded in annihilating the enemy it might be possible, while guarding our flank against any move from the Kovno-Grodno direction, to attack the Osowiec-Grodno line, and take the Bobra crossing near Osowiec from the rear. This presupposed that the long flank stretching through Wlozlawek, Mlawa, and Johannisburg to Osowiec held firm.

The result would be even more favorable for us if, simultaneously with the offensive on the eastern frontier of East Prussia, a move could be made from the Wlozlawek-Johannisburg line, and we could gain ground toward the Narew, and attack Osowiec. I tried to realize this plan, because in this case we would forestall the Russians all along the line. It remained to be seen whether, later on, we should be able to take

the Russian main forces west of the Vistula in the rear.

A leader must weigh up all such possibilities, otherwise he would live from hand to mouth, and thus endanger the conduct of the campaign and the safety of the troops. Grim reality takes care that plans do not go beyond what troops can accomplish in the way of overcoming the enemy's resistance.

The measures which I took as a result of this course of reasoning completely upset the enemy's calculations, which had become known. The Entente hoped to win the war in 1915 through Russia. While the Grand Duke intended an offensive in full force in the Carpathians, strong Russian forces were, according to the so-called "gigantic plan," to be sent forward between the Niemen and the Gumbinnen-Insterburg road against the weak north wing of the Eighth Army, crush it in, envelop the army, and throw it back to the Vistula. Other troops, especially masses of cavalry, were to break through our weak forces between Mława and the Vistula, and invade West Prussia. The stretch of Prussian territory east of the Vistula was to be overrun, and the German troops which occupied it were to be annihilated.

In January a reinforcement of the enemy's front opposite the left wing of the Eighth Army was perceptible. It is very probable that the advance of the Russians toward the Włocławek-Mława line east of the Vistula in December 1914 had been made out with this intention. The completion of the one operation was here, as in the Carpathians, the introduction to another.

The execution of the "gigantic plan" was still only in its first stages; but the Russians had already fixed their eyes firmly on the country east of the Vistula. As early as the beginning of January they had taken away troops from their front west of the Vistula in order to

use them in the north. If we forestalled their plans by our own, we should certainly have to reckon with strong counter-attacks across both the Niemen and the Narew. These counter-attacks were actually made, and indeed with such force and continuity that we had a very hard time of it. The Grand Duke was a really great soldier and strategist.

Flank protection on the Kovno-Olita side, on the one hand, and the Osowiec-Lomza side on the other, was to be secured mainly by those units of the Eighth Army which would become available owing to the shortening of the front. This would result from the enveloping movements to be carried out by both wings in the direction of Grodno.

At the beginning of February, while the four corps were being deployed, the 20th Army Corps of the Ninth Army was sent to the neighborhood southeast of Ortelsburg to reinforce the southern front. It was ready to move on Lomza and Myschinjetz also. Next, the 1st Reserve Corps and the 6th Cavalry Division were sent to Willenberg, the 3d Infantry Division to Neidenburg, and the 1st Guard Reserve Division from General von Woyrsch's Army Detachment to the neighborhood of Soldau. The deployment of these troops would be complete by about February 20. They had been moved very late intentionally. We feared that the withdrawal of troops on such a large scale from occupied Poland could not be kept secret, and might disclose our plan for an offensive in East Prussia. I attached the utmost importance to secrecy for the success of our operations. Later on some more divisions were withdrawn from the front west of the Vistula, a move which was made possible by the fact that the enemy, too, was weakening his front there. These troop movements were a complicated game that required our closest attention.

Now that all this is past, a natural question suggests itself. Was it wise to send German troops to the Carpathians? Undoubtedly they were badly missed in our winter campaign east of the Vistula, where their rightful place was. But they were needed still more in the Carpathians, owing to the immediate condition of the Austrian Army, which required stiffening. I should, however, have found it considerably more difficult to recommend the sending of reinforcements had I at the time realized that we would be given the four army corps.

I am unable to judge whether or not our General Headquarters was at this juncture in a position to release more troops from the West for the East, as it actually did in April. Naturally every addition to our forces in the East would have been welcome. But the great decision to stake everything against Russia was not taken until a much later date.

### III

In the mean time local fighting had continued in the Polish salient of the Vistula. It was doubtful how far this engaged the attention of the Russians. On the whole, one cannot expect any great advantage from such diversions as long as the enemy's troops are to be relied upon and remain steadfast. They become of importance only when the command feels it is losing its grip of affairs as the result of unfavorable events. As soon, however, as demonstrations develop into tactical actions which may produce fairly important local successes, matters assume quite a different aspect.

In order to make the Russians believe that our offensive was to continue, the Ninth Army was to attack in full force in the neighborhood of Balimow at the end of January. For this purpose our General

Headquarters placed eighteen thousand rounds of gas-shells at our disposal. It is characteristic of our ideas at that time that this amount of ammunition was considered something quite exceptional. In the East we were never short of ammunition. We always had as much as was possible for the supply services to bring up on the bad roads during open warfare, and in trench warfare no great dumps were made in those days. In the West, however, conditions were different—ammunition was very short there indeed. None of the warring nations had estimated correctly either the effects of concentrated artillery fire or the consumption of ammunition.

When I was Director of the Operations Department before the war I continually pointed out the necessity of increasing our ammunition supplies in peace to such an output that it would last until deliveries were forthcoming under war contracts. I was unsuccessful in getting even anywhere near the required amount; but even if my proposals had been adopted, there would have been a shortage, because the rate of consumption was too enormous. But we should, at any rate, have been able to overcome the crisis sooner, and perhaps got well ahead with our output instead of always remaining behind the demand. Lieutenant-Colonel Bauer had, as early as the autumn of 1914, done his best to speed up supplies.

The Ninth Army's attack near Bolimow took place on January 31. The weather was too cold for a gas attack, though that as yet we did not realize. Other things, too, did not turn out as we could have wished. We took a few thousand prisoners, but otherwise, from a tactical point of view, our success was small. All the same, our attack made a great impression upon the Russians and strategically our hopes were realized.

The development of the four corps detailed to make

the attack started at the beginning of February and went off smoothly. On February 6 it was completed. We moved our headquarters to Insterburg. We did not find it easy to say good-by to Posen, where we had passed through great and eventful times. But Insterburg called up pleasant memories of the events of September 1914.

For these operations the Tenth Army Headquarters, General von Eichhorn, with Colonel Hell as his Chief of Staff, was placed under the orders of the Commander-in-chief in the East. There would have been too many units for the Eighth Army Headquarters to manage alone. I was very pleased with this new arrangement, for it is easier to operate with two army staffs than with one. I had learned this from my campaign in Poland.

The Tenth Army was placed north of the Eighth, and the boundary of their respective areas ran approximately through Darkehmen. The enveloping group of the Tenth Army—the 21st Army Corps, 39th Army Corps, 38th Reserve Corps (from right to left)—had taken up positions between Ragnit and the big forests northeast of Insterburg, and were covered by the 1st Cavalry Division and the 5th Guard Infantry Brigade as well as by the main reserve, now the Königsberg Landwehr Division, on the great Insterburg road. Then followed, on a line to Lake Spirding, the 3d Reserve Division, 3d Landwehr Division, with a heavy leaven of Landsturm, and the 5th Infantry Brigade.

The attacking group of the Eighth Army under General von Litzmann was placed as follows: the 2d Infantry Division east of Johannisburg, the 40th Reserve Corps south of it, as far as the frontier, and following it, the 4th Cavalry Division. Landsturm formations lined the frontier. The 20th Army Corps was completing its detraining behind the right wing



of the Eighth Army, near Ortelsburg. This corps had come from the Ninth Army, and was to move forward behind General von Litzmann's attacking wing, to Lomza, and then feel its way past Myschinjetz toward the river Narew. The withdrawal of the other troops and their transfer to the Mlawa direction was in full swing. General von Gallwitz was to take over the command between the Vistula and the Orshitz and push south as soon as he had concentrated his forces. It remained to be seen how far the German troops who were advancing into north Poland would be able to get. An offensive here would be the best way of helping the operation by the Tenth and Eighth Armies and forestalling any counter-attacks by the enemy.

The "winter battle" was inaugurated on February 7, on which day General von Litzmann initiated operations. The rest of the Eighth Army and the Tenth Army were not to advance and open their attack before February 8. Only the barest outlines of the operations could be given by orders; the rest had to be left to the judgment of the army commands. But the same tactical views were shared by all, so success was assured everywhere. Even during the battle itself the Commander-in-chief in the East had but few dispositions to make. I had to be thinking of the next move and the covering of the flanks.

I did not find it easy to start the army off on its task. The winter was cold. An exceptionally fierce snow-storm had been raging since February 4 or 5, roads and railways were buried, and it was difficult to get ahead off the beaten track. Snow-drifts, as high as a man, were succeeded by bare places covered with thin ice. However, no alteration was made in the original scheme. The Russians had even greater difficulties to contend with, because their supply-trains had been sent on ahead.

Our troops were equipped for a winter campaign, and the transports had been put on runners, though these proved later to be impracticable, for they could not be used on roads which were covered with snow only in places.

The feats performed by man and horse during the following days are beyond description, and forever redound to their honor. The heads of the marching columns worked their way laboriously through the snow-drifts. Wagons got stuck in the snow. The columns stopped and got longer and longer. The infantry edged its way past the wagons and guns, and tried to catch up with those in front. Ten to twelve horses were harnessed to guns and ammunition-wagons. So the roads were gradually covered with long marching columns, infantry pushing ahead, interspersed with only a few guns and still fewer ammunition-wagons. For the night or when fighting was taking place the columns closed up a little. After a few days the weather changed. The roads became impassable. Great pools of water covered the frozen ground off the roads and the surface of the marshes. It was lucky that by our wide encircling movement we captured provisions from the enemy's provision columns, for otherwise we would have had to break off the whole operation through failure of supply.

The commands and the subordinate staffs had to face extraordinary difficulties. It was a long time before battle-worthy units could be brought up when an engagement with the enemy took place. Orders could not be transmitted, wires were broken down by the storm, messages did not arrive. And yet the most wonderful things were accomplished.

The operation, like most operations, did not pass without friction, which prejudiced the strategical unity.

General Litzmann's troops made good progress on

the 7th. They got as far as Johannisburg and farther south crossed the Pissa. On the 8th they took Johannisburg, and during the following days, their flank secured against any enemy movement from Osowiec, they pressed forward to Raigrod, where they met with strong opposition. An enemy attack from the direction of Osowiec was met and repulsed. At the same time the center of the Eighth Army, following close on the heels of the enemy, who was giving way along the whole front, was approaching Lyck.

Both leaders and troops spared no effort to accelerate the advance, but progress was too slow for the strategic combination as a whole. Lyck, which was splendidly defended by the 3d Siberian Corps, fell only on the morning of the 14th. This corps escaped annihilation and withdrew *via* Augustovo behind the marshes of the upper Bobr.

After the fall of Lyck progress was rapid. By the night of the 16th General von Litzmann was in Augustovo after further heavy fighting. I now endeavored to push forward the right wing of the Eighth Army from Raigrod due east *via* Taino (south of Augustovo) to Schtabin, Krasnybor, and the Bobr, so as to come in on the flank of the 3d Siberian Corps once more. But the Eighth Army did not consider this to be practicable, owing to the condition of the roads.

Very early in the operations, while our columns were still marching on Augustovo, the 3d Reserve Division, the 5th Infantry Brigade, and the 11th Landwehr Division had gradually been withdrawn from this battle-front and pushed forward for the protection of the armies against attacks from the Osowiec-Lomza line. Osowiec was to be invested and stormed. It was now certain that strong forces were gathering in the neighborhood of Lomza, and the portion of the 20th Army Corps stationed there was no longer sufficient.

In the mean time the enveloping movement of the Tenth Army had been completed. By the night of the 10th, after extraordinary forced marches and incredible efforts, the center of this army, moving on the Tilsit-Kalvaria line, had reached the Insterburg-Kovno road near Wirballen, and when Lyck fell on the 14th the infantry columns were already due north of the great Augustovo forest near Suwalki-Seiny.

The retreating Russian Army was attacked vigorously in the flank and forced southward. It was apparently taken by surprise again, just as at the beginning of our offensive from Upper Silesia and Hohen-salza. In this connection our intelligence service did good work by spreading false rumors and preventing the enemy from obtaining information. The Russians and the Entente did not succeed in getting news of these movements. It is indeed extremely difficult to obtain accurate information about the enemy, especially in time for it to be of any use. If it were otherwise, conducting a campaign with inferior numbers would not be such an extraordinarily difficult task. We were favored by luck at Tannenberg.

Some parts of the Russian Army which had retired toward Kovno thus stood on our flank, and attacked us incessantly, with a view to holding up our advance. It was in vain. They were thrown back on the Kovno-Olita line by the troops protecting the flank of the Tenth Army.

On the evening of the 14th it seemed as though it would be possible to complete the envelopment of the enemy due east of Augustovo. General von Eichhorn diverted his left wing in this direction. On the 15th and 16th the advance-guard of the 21st Army Corps advanced on the Seiny-Augustovo *chaussée*, far into the forest, but here it was overrun by Russian columns pouring back eastward, and part was taken prisoner.

Up to February 18 forces of the Tenth Army pushed on boldly along the northern edge of the forest to the vicinity of Grodno. Here they took up a position facing west, with their rear close to the fortifications. This bold and venturesome movement cut off the enemy's retreat. Other German troops penetrated the forest from the north, and after the capture of Augustovo reached the Grodno-Lipsk *chaussée* and the Bobr below Krasnybor, fighting all the way. At Lipsk the ring was closed.

The position of our troops before Grodno was exceedingly hazardous. On the 20th and 21st violent attacks were made from the fortress where the Russian reinforcements had assembled. The Russians made repeated attacks from the Augustovo forest, into which they had poured in their retreat. The German troops stood firm, though suffering heavy losses.

It was a brilliant piece of work for the 21st Army Corps, and its leader, Gen. Fritz von Below, who afterward made good as Commander-in-chief in the West, had reason to be proud of his troops and his own forcefulness. The staff of the Tenth Army could claim a share of the glory with good conscience.

A few days later the masses of Russian troops surging in the Augustovo forest, and defending themselves, desperately surrendered. The battle was at an end.

#### IV

The tactical results of the winter campaign in Masuria were important: 110,000 prisoners and many hundred guns. The Russian Tenth Army had been annihilated, and Russia's strength was once more perceptibly reduced.

The original plan of operations had comprised an attack on Osowiec with the help of the heaviest possible

direct fire. Of that part of the attacking armies which had reached the upper Bobr south of Augustovo, during the fighting in the forest, the 38th and 40th Reserve Corps, the 2d Infantry Division, and the 4th Cavalry Division were to have crossed the river. Before they could do so, however, they had become partly involved in that tremendous fight in the forest which preceded the destruction of the Tenth Russian Army.

I had awaited the end of this fighting with increasing suspense. The section of the Eighth Army which had been employed here—the von Litzmann group—joined the Tenth Army. The Eighth Army received instructions to effect the attack on Osowiec from Grajewo and take over the defense of East Prussia against Russian attacks from that point to the Orshitz.

Our troops did not succeed in getting through the marshes of the upper Bobr in spite of repeated and obstinate attempts. We wanted frost, but heavy rain continued to fall without ceasing. It was hardly possible to remain in the forest and marsh district. The upper Bobr could be crossed only by the existing causeways. The bridges had been destroyed. The 3d Siberian Corps which had escaped at Lyck offered a brave resistance, and the desperate stand of the Russians in the Augustovo forest had given them time to strengthen the defenses of the Grodno-Osowiec section.

Our troops were worn out by the bad weather and the strain of the operations. They reported that the Russians were stationed south of the channel in concrete positions. That seemed quite possible, although we were very skeptical. Subsequently, in the year 1916, Lieutenant-Colonel Hoffmann inspected the Russian positions, but saw no concrete works. The wearier attacking troops are the stronger does the position to be attacked appear to them, and they give the enemy credit for strength he does not possess. This is a very

human trait. It did not have any influence on the decisions we came to, for the young contingents were undoubtedly exhausted, and this necessitated fresh measures.

Meanwhile the attack on Osowiec had not made any headway, either. In spite of our powerful artillery it defied frontal attack, as the commanding heights on the southern bank of the Bobr could not be reached at all points.

Under these circumstances I could not conceal from myself that this great victory had been deprived of its full strategical results. Army Headquarters was called upon to make grave and difficult decisions.

In the first place, the order was given to discontinue the attacks on the Bobr and Osowiec.

The Tenth Army could not remain where it was. Very strong forces were needed to protect our flanks on the east, the Olita-Kovno direction, but they were not available. Communication with the rear, and the conditions under which the army was living, had become too difficult, owing to the inclemency of the weather. They could not be borne for long. The broad-gage railway built by the Russians from Margrabowa *via* Ratschki to Suwalki could do little to ameliorate this state of affairs. The roads and tracks were too bad, the weather too unfavorable, and the horses too exhausted. Our transport could hardly get on at all on the highroads with their thin surface of worn stones. Besides, we had very little available. The army had to return to conditions under which it could live and recuperate. All this made it urgently necessary that the Tenth Army should face about and withdraw.

At the very beginning of the operations orders had been given for the construction of rear positions east of Augustovo-Suwalki, reaching as far as the Niemen.

The work was immediately put in hand by labor companies as soon as we had conquered this district. These positions—although only in an early stage—now offered a certain amount of support. The Tenth Army received orders for its right wing to wheel and retire to the prepared line. It was left to that army itself to carry out the details of the movement and also decide whether the left wing should withdraw the same distance or only as far as the Kalvaria-Pilwischki line. It was to be presumed that the enemy would press closely after them.

At the same time the Tenth Army had received instructions to release forces which were urgently required farther west. The great Russian counter-attacks had begun against our long flank on the southern frontier of West and East Prussia. Further, the Russians were keeping us busy to the north of the Niemen. The battle raged all round German territory west of the Vistula.

Quiet reigned in the Polish bend of the Vistula.

The Austrian Army's offensive for the relief of Przemyśl had been unsuccessful. The Russians very soon made counter-attacks. Przemyśl would have to be left to its fate. On the whole Eastern front we were now faced by the prospect of heavy Russian attacks.

## V

After the Augustovo forest had been cleared and the wounded removed, at the beginning of March, General von Eichhorn, in accordance with instructions, withdrew his right to the defensive line, and his left north of the Augustovo forest as far as Seiny and south of Kalvaria. He proposed to fall on the pursuing Russians again and defeat them by enveloping their right wing.



The idea was a good one and in accordance with the resolute spirit prevailing at Army Headquarters. The days from March 9-11 witnessed a fresh success, for the newly formed Tenth Russian Army suffered defeat. But the troops needed rest so much and the weather was so bad that the army command had reluctantly to decide to give up any idea of further attacks and have recourse to position warfare, especially as more troops had to be transferred to the Eighth Army and Von Gallwitz's detachment. The left wing remained in the neighborhood of Kalvaria-Mariampol-Pilwischki. About the middle of March the Russians hurled themselves against these positions, but a period of quiet gradually set in.

The Russian attacks on the southern front became more and more determined and the fighting more and more violent. During General von Litzmann's advance from Johannisburg through Bialla in the early days of the winter battle, the 20th Army Corps and the 41st Infantry Division, with some Landsturm, had pushed forward on the Johannisburg-Kolno road toward Lomza so as to cut this fortress off from the north. The 37th Infantry Division was pressing forward *via* Myschinjetz. The 41st Infantry Division encountered the enemy in front of the fortifications of Lomza, and was just strong enough to isolate the sector between the Pissa and the Sczuszin-Stawiski-Lomza road.

The 3d Reserve Division and the 5th Infantry Brigade came up only by degrees. They were to cover the long sector between Stawiski and the Bobr, while the 11th Landwehr Division began the attack on Osowiec. The arrival of the 3d Reserve Division and the 5th Infantry Brigade coincided with an attack from Lomza by the Russian Guard and the 5th Army Corps. From February 21 heavy fighting developed to the

north of the fortress. The German troops fought heroically, but the crisis was grave.

One morning the Chief of Staff of the Eighth Army reported to me that the line of the 3d Reserve Division had been pierced. However, it managed to recover and hold fast, as the Russians relaxed their efforts. For a long time their situation and, of course, that of the force besieging Osowiec were very critical. It was not until the arrival of the 1st Landwehr Division before Lomza early in March that our front was so strongly held that I was able to regard all danger east of the Pissa as past.

The steadfastness of the troops, and especially the 3d Reserve Division, had resulted in a brilliant defensive victory. General von Scholtz took over command of this sector, and his sphere of command was subsequently extended as far as the Schkwa. General von Scholtz had already held commands at the battle of Tannenberg and in Poland with great distinction. He was considerably senior in the service to the commander of the Eighth Army, Gen. Otto von Below, but the General readily took service under his younger comrade.

Between the Pissa and the Orshitz General von Staabs, with his 37th Infantry Division and the Landsturm stationed there, had gained ground in the direction of the Narew. Before long the Russians were considerably reinforced here. They attacked incessantly from Novograd and, especially with the 4th Siberian Corps, from Ostrolenka. The fighting became increasingly severe, and more and more of the troops who had taken part in the winter battle had to be transferred to this point. By degrees there arrived from the Tenth Army the 2d Infantry Division, the 75th Reserve Division, the 10th Landwehr Division, and the 4th Cavalry Division. But in the end even

these were not enough. The 76th Reserve Division from the Tenth Army was sent there also after being transferred for a time to the west of the Orshitz, in General von Gallwitz's area.

Owing to the character of the country, with its great stretches of marsh intersected by patches of forest and narrow defiles covered with scraggy pines, the fighting here was broken up into local actions. It placed heavy responsibility on the subordinate commands and officers of lower rank. Man fought with man. Though these local crises seemed interminable, and the fighting dragged on into April, we were still over the frontier when it came to an end.

After the middle of February fighting was in full swing west of the Orshitz also. General von Gallwitz, an enterprising and resourceful soldier, and a man with a variety of interests in every sphere of life, was one of the best leaders in our army. He strengthened the weak front to the west of Mława, and in the middle of February pushed forward here up the Vistula as far as Plock. Here once more we forestalled the Russian plans and made a thrust into their area of concentration.

Meanwhile the German reinforcements had taken up their positions on the Neidenburg-Willenberg front, the left wing of Von Gallwitz's detachment. The situation seemed to promise that a fresh attack in the direction of Prasznysz would dislodge the enemy troops facing the 17th Reserve Corps. A general advance of Von Gallwitz's detachment to the line of the Narew would then be possible. At that time this seemed important strategically. The attack against Osowiec and the Upper Bobr was still in progress. Every local success achieved by General von Gallwitz improved the general position and our prospects for further engagements. We were in a state of great tension.

General von Gallwitz attacked on February 22, in

the direction of Prasnysz, with portions of the 17th Reserve Corps, the 1st Reserve Corps, and the 3d Infantry Division. General von Morgen stormed this very strongly fortified town on the 24th. The situation was everywhere favorable when it was reported that strong Russian forces were advancing between the Ciechanov-Mlawa road and the Orshitz, and had already outflanked General von Morgen. Reconnoitering by means of aeroplanes was not possible in those days, and we were very poorly equipped as regards flying squadrons. Our cavalry patrols could not get through, and finally infantry outposts were in contact everywhere. On February 27, in face of the attack by the Siberian Corps, Prasnysz had to be abandoned with very heavy losses on our side. General von Morgen retreated toward the Janow-Chorshele line, at the frontier. The Russians did not press on so hard to the north, but their attacks toward Mlawa were extremely vigorous.

The local commanders proposed to hold the frontier position in course of construction to the south of Neidenburg-Willenberg, but I made the 1st Reserve Corps stand farther south. Here, also, the fighting became very violent.

Up to March 7 the Russians attacked incessantly between Mlawa and Chorshele, and suffered very heavy losses, but in vain.

At this time there was fighting on the whole of the eastern and southern front of East and West Prussia. The Tenth Army had completed its withdrawal, wheeled, and was now beginning its counter-attack north of the Augustovo forest. Near Lomza the crisis was at an end, but no conclusion had yet been reached between the Pissa and Mlawa. Every day I had to make innumerable tactical and other decisions. The commanders on the southern front were appealing

continuously for reinforcements, but the Tenth Army still thought it could bring off a success, even if only a local one, and was therefore reluctant to part with troops.

In the mean time further reinforcements from the Tenth Army had reached General von Gallwitz and the right wing of the Eighth Army. We were now strong enough to make a counter-attack on both sides of the Orshitz against the enemy, who had been weakened during the last few days by heavy losses.

Our advance took place from March 8-12 and ceased north of Prasnysz. The Russians replied with heavy counter-attacks. On March 18 they taught our troops near Jednoroshetz that swamps are no sure protection against the enemy. Our soldiers connected the idea of swamps with the idea of being swallowed up, but the Russians, as children of Nature, knew better. The swamps in the region of the fighting were frozen only in places. In others they were not deep, and covered a firm, non-porous bed, so it was possible to wade through them.

At the end of March the fighting to the west of the Orshitz died down. Here it was possible to withdraw the 76th Reserve Division and transfer it to the east of the river. We were also able to release the 6th Cavalry Division west of the Orshitz. It was urgently needed north of the Pregel.

Von Gallwitz's detachment had achieved great successes, and this officer also was justified in being proud of his troops. They had defended themselves against an enormous numerical superiority and even forced the enemy back.

From the end of March and beginning of April onward the troops on the whole of the southern front could at last enjoy the rest they longed for.

The engagements from Lomza to Mława are not so

well known. In the East, Germany thought only of big successes. It was no longer possible to achieve these by such obvious means. The Grand Duke's great counter-move against the victory of the winter, the attack on the Narew against our weak flank, and also part of the Entente's plan of campaign for the year 1915, had all been frustrated. The troops, both collectively and individually, had fought in a manner worthy of the great achievements of the past. Old and new formations had vied with one another in battle. There was more staying power in the old formations. The Landwehr and Landsturm forces had done valuable work. The command was fully competent for its task and the campaign of the past winter had been a splendid military achievement.

## VI

Apart from the big decisive actions, engagements had been taking place north of the Pregel since the middle of February. On both sides they were only conducted by Landsturm and Landwehr troops, and had no strategic importance, but they kept us occupied and always on the alert.

At the beginning of February the Russians were still on Prussian territory northeast of Tilsit, and we were justified in our desire to wrest this last small corner of German soil from the power of the enemy. The task was intrusted to the Governor of Königsberg, General von Pappritz, with the Landsturm forces stationed there, reinforced by some artillery. Tauroggen was seized on February 18.

The name Tauroggen is bound up with great historical memories, and it was a misfortune for the two states, now at war, that they forsook that road of Russo-German friendship which Tauroggen symbolizes.

The peace which reigned once more north of the Pregel was rudely broken on March 17 by an inroad near Memel and Tauroggen of a Russian force composed of home-defense and frontier-guard formations. They took us by surprise while we were still devoting all our attention to events elsewhere.

It is true that there had been rumors of the concentration of enemy forces on the Russian side of the frontier near Memel. But there had been so many rumors, and hitherto nothing had come of them. Moreover, there was no reason whatever to expect a Russian attempt in that neighborhood.

The Russian horde advanced on Memel, which the Landsturm forces abandoned. We heard of this through a telephone girl, who rang us up and gave us this news when the Russians were actually in the post-office.

I endeavored to obtain the Iron Cross of the Second Class for this young girl, Fräulein Erica Röstel. This was not possible, but she afterward received a gold watch from the state.

The Russians took Tauroggen at the same time, and pushed on in the direction of Tilsit. The actions on the other fronts had used up the reserves. The command of the 2d Army Corps had now to send an *Ersatz* battalion to replace them from Stettin, a proof of how freely we had spent ourselves, and how severely our strength had been taxed by the engagements which had taken place since the beginning of February.

On March 21 Memel was freed, and on the 22d three thousand people who had been carried off were recovered from the enemy. The Russians had wrought incredible havoc. Tauroggen fell on March 29. The 6th Cavalry Division was transferred to that district and from that time guarded it from the Lithuanian side of the frontier.

East Prussia was once more free, and henceforth was spared any further enemy invasion. It was now possible to begin the work of reconstruction.

Since the middle of February our headquarters had been at Lötzen. These were hard days for me until the beginning of April. I had to abandon the hopes I had entertained of making immediate strategical use of the advantages gained by the winter battle. Tactically this battle had been successful, and that filled me with satisfaction. It was comforting to know that the Grand Duke's heavy attacks had been shattered and that we stood everywhere on hostile soil. But we had taken but one step toward the final decision against Russia, and it was with that goal that my innermost thoughts and feelings were most concerned. The fearful waste of Russian strength in East and West Prussia ought, later on, to help the operations in Galicia. The Russian losses had been extraordinarily heavy in comparison with ours. Even Russia's enormous resources in man-power could not stand such a drain indefinitely.

Each of the successive tactical situations had made the fullest demands on my mental and spiritual energies. It is simply impossible to put it all on paper—the proud hopes, the despondency, the disappointments, the heart-searchings before a decision, the annoyance caused by one thing and another. I cannot describe the differences which had so often to be overcome, nor can I portray how deeply I felt for the troops who had to bear the privations of a winter campaign in such inclement weather.

Later on I had happier times at Lötzen.

Our quarters and the office were small, but I liked them. I look back with pleasure on that time in the friendly little East Prussian town.

While the fighting was still going on one of our most important tasks was the construction of rear positions.



Along the whole of the eastern frontier of Prussia there arose a barbed-wire zone as the first permanent element of the new positions. Numerous special battalions composed of poorly trained men unfit for labor or service in the field were sent there at my request. They often had to work under enemy fire, and did so devotedly. The word "digger" is a title of honor. These units were subsequently transferred from the Eastern to the Western front.

About this time General Headquarters ordered the number of regiments to a division in the West to be reduced from four to three, so that a division now had nine battalions instead of twelve. We did the same on our front. In this way a larger number of strategic units was formed. Operations were thus facilitated, and no doubt this was a great advantage. But a division of nine battalions is too weak, tactically, while the staff and administrative services are too large. After the war I should most certainly have advocated the re-establishment of the larger divisions.

It remains to be seen what will now happen to our proud and splendid army, which, assisted by allies of not very high military value, has kept its head above water for the last four years, defied the world, and preserved its homeland almost intact from the horrors of war. Shall such an army vanish completely? Will Germany commit suicide once more? I cannot and shall never believe it. The seventy to eighty millions of Germans will some day come together and think things over. When they remember the overwhelming military achievements of this war, they will not forget what a really united army can do.

## THE SUMMER CAMPAIGN AGAINST RUSSIA, 1915

**Scheme for a Decisive Battle in the East—The Thrust Toward Lithuania and Courland—The Break-through in Galicia—The Offensive Over the Narew—The Battles East of the Vistula—The Occupation of Novo Georgievsk—The Advance into Eastern Poland—The Passage of the Niemen—The Attack of the Niemen Army—The Conclusion of the Summer Campaign.**

(Map LX)

### I

THE offensive undertaken by General von Conrad in January had been unsuccessful. At the start ground was gained along the whole of the Carpathian ridge, but after that matters came to a standstill. The Russians made their counter-attack and pressed the Austrian Army hard. Only the plucky German Southern Army under General von Linsingen continued to make progress. Without these German troops the position could not have been maintained. The difficulties of this theater of war in the winter were enormous. They subjected the troops, who worked wonders, to a terrible strain. The losses due to frostbite were very great.

Przemysl was not relieved and fell on March 19.

While the attacks against German territory east of the Vistula abated early in April, the Grand Duke continued his offensive against the Austrian Army with the express purpose of descending on Hungary from the Carpathians and putting Austria-Hungary out of the war.

In April the Headquarters Staff at Teschen considered the military situation of the Dual Monarchy to be extremely grave. Italy's attitude had become increasingly doubtful. She had refused all Austria-Hungary's extensive concessions, the necessity for which I myself had urged on General von Conrad, and was fairly caught in the net spread by the Entente. In spite of its superiority in numbers, the latter needed additional forces to master us. It became more and more certain that we had to reckon on Italy entering the war on the side of our enemies. Austria-Hungary realized that she had to reinforce her troops on the Italian frontier considerably. The Serbian Army also seemed to require watching again.

The more the Austrian Army was obliged to weaken itself in Hungary and Galicia, in favor of other fronts, the more severely would it feel a Russian attack. Feeling at Teschen became ever more despondent. The Austrian liaison officer, acting on instructions from General von Conrad, described the situation to us as one of the utmost gravity. Judging by my knowledge of the Austro-Hungarian Army, this was certainly true. We forwarded these serious reports and our interpretation of them to General Headquarters.

About the middle of April the situation in the Carpathians became still more critical. General Boroëvic's army was thrown back over the ridge, while farther east the German Southern Army stood firm. The moment had arrived when help was absolutely necessary. We despatched the 25th Reserve Division, which was with the Ninth Army awaiting the order, by rail. They arrived just in time to avert the worst disaster.

We reported the measures we had taken to General Headquarters, who fully concurred in our view of the situation. The Beskiden Corps was raised under General von der Marwitz, who had hitherto com-

manded our 38th Reserve Corps. The Commander-in-chief in the East also gave up the 4th Division and a newly formed division to reinforce the Carpathian front. But, in spite of all this, the situation there continued to be grave. We had to send reinforcements to the Serbian front at the same time. These reinforcements afterward joined General von Linsingen during his attack in May.

The German General Staff now resolved to try to obtain a decision against Russia. The plan was an ambitious one, and the very idea of weakening our forces in the West in spite of the critical situation there was a proof of the General Staff's readiness to accept responsibility.

Since the engagements round Ypres in November the fighting on the whole of the Western front had developed into trench warfare. The cessation of the advance in France, the bending back of the right wing in September, and the poor results of the fighting in Flanders had caused great depression in the army in the West, and this had been deepened by the lack of ammunition. In January an attack near Soissons by the 3d Army Corps, under its admirable and distinguished commander, General von Lochow, had had a most encouraging effect, and an attack by the Saxons near Craonne immediately afterward led to splendid results. In February and March, after a great struggle, we had at last succeeded in shattering a determined French effort to break through in Champagne.

The future hopes of the Entente were, for the moment, based on Russia alone. In England Kitchener's army was in course of formation. This was a great creation of a distinguished organizer. Of the thirty-two divisions the first twelve could be ready by May. The Entente's war industry was extending. The United States had been added to the number of the

Entente's contractors. Although at first we were able to hinder the export of war materials from America through economic measures, this could not have a lasting effect. In our great struggle this action on the part of the United States could be interpreted by us only as evidence of favoritism toward our enemies. Her behavior roused feelings of the greatest bitterness in us.

It was to be expected that the German offensive against Russia would, for her relief, give rise to enemy attacks on the Western front. The critical engagements in May near La Bassée and Arras, which gave us so much anxiety, illustrate the responsibility assumed by General Headquarters, when it risked a decisive battle in the East.

General von Mackensen, with the newly formed Eleventh Army, which consisted principally of troops from the Western front, received instructions early in May to attack and crush in the flank of the Russian armies, which were pursuing their offensive in the Carpathians with supreme contempt of death. He was a distinguished man, of great accomplishments, and a brilliant soldier whose deeds will live in history for all time. Colonel von Seeckt, formerly General von Lochow's Chief of Staff, was appointed his Chief of Staff. Thanks to his keen intellect and clear judgment, this officer became one of the most prominent figures in the war.

Field-Marshal Prince Leopold of Bavaria took command of the Ninth Army, and well deserved this, the highest military rank. He readily put himself under Field-Marshal von Hindenburg, who was inconsiderably junior to him in the service.

The Commander-in-chief in the East received instructions to demonstrate on his front in order to pin down the enemy forces there.

## II

The Ninth Army had been enjoying a spell of rest. Early in March it thought it could bring off some success north of the Pilica and made an attack there, in spite of great difficulties. But it was soon forced to desist.

In accordance with the instructions of General Headquarters the Ninth Army was now to attack at Skierniewice. We had received a supply of gas and anticipated great tactical results from its use, as the Russians were not yet fully protected against gas. We also had reason to expect local successes from an attack by the Tenth Army, east of Suwalki, and instructions were issued accordingly.

The gas attack by the Ninth Army, which took place on May 2, was not a success. The wind was favorable, but the troops had not been properly instructed. The gas was emitted as intended, but the troops imagined that the enemy ought not to be able to move at all. As the latter were still firing in places and our own artillery did not co-operate as it should have done, the infantry did not attack. It assumed that the gas had had no effect. The Ninth Army was unlucky with gas. When it repeated the gas attack at the same place later, but not in connection with these operations, the wind veered round. We suffered severe losses by gasing. The troops were not fond of gas; the installation took too long and both officers and men disliked waiting with full gas-containers in the trenches for the wind.

The attack by the Tenth Army at Suwalki was a tactical success.

I do not know whether these attacks really helped the operations as a whole, but tactically they were correct and on that ground they seemed to be justified.

More effective support of General von Mackensen's operations would be forthcoming when we ourselves were able to initiate an extensive movement against the enemy. This was impossible on the fronts occupied by the Ninth Army. Von Gallwitz's Army Detachment, and the Eighth and Tenth Armies, and was practicable only north of the Niemen in Lithuania and Courland. At the end of March and beginning of April we had received from the Western front the 3d Cavalry Division and the Bavarian Cavalry Division, and these had been sent to Gumbinnen, as the left wing of the Tenth Army was still very weak. These two divisions and the 6th Cavalry Division, which was already stationed north of the Pregel, were to advance into Lithuania and Courland at the end of April, supported by the 6th, 36th, and 78th Reserve Divisions. The cavalry divisions had been very carefully equipped for these operations. General von Lauenstein was placed in command here.

On April 27 our march into Lithuania and Courland began.

General von Lauenstein initiated the movement planned by the Commander-in-chief in the East by marching in three columns on Shavli:

With the right column—Bavarian and 3d Cavalry Division and 36th Reserve Division—through Jurborg.

With the center column—78th Reserve Division—to the great Tauroggen road.

With the left column—6th Cavalry Division and 6th Reserve Division—from the neighborhood of Memel.

On the evening of the 27th the 3d Cavalry Division already stood southeast of the Tauroggen-Kielmy road not far from Skaudvily, while the Bavarian Cavalry Division had got to Rossieny. The 6th Cavalry Division had some hard fighting east of the frontier and had not made much progress by the 27th.

The enemy, whose main force had remained north-east of Tauroggen since the end of March, withdrew to Kielmy and escaped, as the 3d Cavalry Division did not attack. On April 28 the Bavarian and the 3d Cavalry Division were near Kielmy and to the east the 6th was near Worny. In two days seventy-five kilometers had been covered. On the 29th the cavalry divisions were approaching Shavli and Kurschani. On the 30th Shavli, which the Russians had set on fire, was occupied. The 6th and 3d Cavalry Divisions continued the movement in the direction of Mitau, at which the 6th arrived on May 3. Here they could no longer break the enemy's defense and for the time they remained southwest of Mitau. Later on they withdrew behind the Windau, along the Mitau-Moscheiki Railway. The 3d Cavalry Division halted shortly after this and the Bavarian Cavalry Division came up with them. The two divisions then moved south-east from Shavli *via* Beissagola on Keidany. Here, however, the enemy's defense was stronger. They, therefore, yielded slowly before his pressure and retired behind the Dubissa in the direction of Kielmy.

The infantry divisions had also carried out some extraordinary forced marches. The 36th Reserve Division was pushed forward to the lower Dubissa to act as cover against attacks from Kovno, while the 78th and 6th Reserve Divisions had united near Shavli.

The object of this daring enterprise had been attained. The Russians were visibly being reinforced.

There now followed on an extended front on the Dubissa, from the mouth of the river up to Kielmy, round Shavli and to the northwest, a series of critical engagements which dragged on through May and June and proved most exhausting for both leaders and men. On our side they were carried out, both defensively and offensively, with a great numerical inferiority,



and in order to hold what we had gained and pin down the enemy further, we were obliged to bring up the 8th Cavalry Division of the Ninth Army, the 1st Reserve Division and 2d Cavalry Division from Von Gallwitz's Army Detachment, and the weak Beckmann Division of the Tenth Army to the north of Niemen. The forces were thus increased to such an extent that it became necessary to combine them under one army command with its numerous administrative services; corps commanders no longer sufficed. Gen. Otto von Below was appointed to this command and the army was given the name of the "Niemen" Army. General von Scholtz was given the command of the Eighth Army in his place.

We held the Dubissa line by hard fighting. Shavli could not be held permanently and it was possible to bring back only a part of the plentiful leather supplies which were of such great importance to us.

As early as May we had to abandon the town to the enemy, and remained due south of it. Our cavalry stood on the banks of the Windau from Kurschani downward as far as Hasenpoth; every now and then their line was broken by the enemy, but in spite of that they held the line of the river.

On the evening of May 7 the 3d Cavalry Brigade took Libau. We were well aware that the Russian forces there were of very little value, but we did not know of the condition of the fortifications. Libau had been abandoned as a military port before the war. The extensive military harbor works were evidence of the ambition of imperial Russia, bent as she was on extending her power. The town contained some important industrial establishments, including one of the largest barbed-wire factories in Russia. Lieutenant-Colonel Hoffmann suggested that a surprise attack should be made and I agreed to this. Our troops were

not very numerous. The 3d Cavalry Brigade under Colonel von der Schulenberg, two or three battalions and a few batteries belonging to the reserve divisions already on the spot, were to approach the town from the east, while a Landsturm battalion approached it from the south along the coast and torpedo-boats attacked from the sea. The fortress was not seriously defended. The fortifications were blown up by the garrison, and the coast guns turned out to be dummies. The weak garrison of 1,500 men surrendered when our troops forced their way in from the south and east. The taking of Libau was not a martial achievement worthy of a permanent place in history, but it was a happy little enterprise which all who took part in it recall with pleasure. Its most valuable feature was that it was carried out without any loss. It was always my endeavor to achieve success at the least possible cost. Troops may take pride in bearing heavy losses and succeeding in spite of them. The commander must have a different point of view.

## III

In the early hours of May 2 General von Mackensen, in a well-prepared attack brilliantly carried out by the troops, broke through the Russian front on the middle Dunajec. During the next few days the second and third Russian lines were taken. After this the Russians withdrew from Hungary northward over the ridge of the Carpathians. Hungary was freed from the enemy and the Austrian Army greatly relieved.

It was high time, for at this time Italy entered the war.

Her army numbered over 600,000 men besides the numerous formations in second line which were not intended to take part in the fighting immediately.

This was an enormous accession of strength to the Entente. By September the total strength of the Italian front-line troops had already increased to 900,000 men.

General von Mackensen pressed forward unceasingly in the direction of Jaroslav on the San and stormed the bridge-head on May 15. The neighboring Austrian armies linked up on either side of the advancing German troops and the German Southern Army also attacked and gained ground to the north beyond Stryj. At the beginning of June Przemyśl was again wrested from the Russians.

North of the upper Vistula the Russians abandoned the Nida and withdrew toward the Vistula. General von Woyrsch was able, in mid-May, to advance as far as Kielce while keeping his left wing in position.

The Russian armies between the Carpathians and the Pilica had thus been obliged to abandon their positions and lost heavily in so doing. But, speaking generally, the allies were able to follow up with only frontal attacks, although they made desperate endeavors to effect local encircling movements, and more particularly to fall on the western flank of the Russian Carpathian Army. An attempt at an enveloping movement made by the right wing of the Austrian Army in the Bukovina was frustrated; it was not strong enough, and ended in a withdrawal before enemy pressure.

The difficulty of keeping up communications with the rear stopped the advance on the San for a time. These difficulties were overcome early in June, and the attack was resumed. The heaviest fighting always fell to the German troops. On June 22 Lemberg was recovered, and soon afterward Rava Ruska was stormed and the Russians were forced to retreat still farther toward the Bug. They were simultaneously continu-

ing their retreat down the Vistula in the direction of Lublin-Ivangorod.

At Lötzen we had, of course, watched the progress of events in Galicia with the greatest anxiety, and never ceased to make plans, aiming at more active support of the operations against Russia. At the moment our forces were seriously reduced. But the Russian forces on our front, especially in front of the Ninth Army, had weakened. The enemy had also withdrawn troops for Galicia from the southern frontier of West and East Prussia. They had moved troops from the front facing the Tenth Army to Lithuania, when we invaded that province. The enemy front, therefore, was thinner all along our line. We had also withdrawn a good many troops by degrees and surrendered them for the operations in the southeast.

We should be able to do so more as time went on, but with such an enormously long front there had to be a limit to the process. Our positions had, at any rate, to be manned sufficiently to permit of the relief of each individual soldier. It was not until June, when General Headquarters assigned some newly formed Landsturm regiments to us, that we were able to think of preparing divisions for our own offensive operations.

The withdrawal of the Russian front in Galicia, however painful it was for them, did not result in any decisive military victory. They withdrew, fighting all the way, just as far as we could venture to advance, having regard for our communications. They were not yet fighting on their own soil, and until that stage had been reached they could afford to abandon large areas. Moreover, in these frontal engagements our losses were not inconsiderable. It remained to be seen whether other plans would not hold out better prospects. We could add nine or ten divisions to Von

Gallwitz's Detachment, which had now developed into the Twelfth Army, for a concentrated offensive in the direction of the lower Narew, but we had no great hopes of this. It was to be assumed with certainty that Russians, at the best, would offer resistance, and then withdraw as they had done in Galicia.

In theory the operations which we had contemplated after the winter campaign seemed more promising; that is, to press forward along the Osowiec-Grodno line, and perhaps also past Lomza. Such a movement might have had decisive results. It was by far the shortest way to the rear of the Russian forces which were retreating from East Galicia between the Vistula and the Bug. We reconnoitered the swamps on either side of Osowiec in the hope of finding some way across, but, as we had foreseen, the results were unsatisfactory. The condition of the ground put all thought of crossing there out of the question. We had to reckon on strong resistance on the Osowiec-Grodno line, a very strong tactical position in itself and presumably strongly held. We could not expect to overcome this resistance and the other difficulties which lay before us. It was with the deepest regret that I felt myself unable to agree to such an offensive, even at the suggestion of General Headquarters.

Every operation farther to the north increased the distance from the decisive point southeast of Grodno. This disadvantage would have to be counteracted by speed, especially if the rate of the enemy retreat was accelerated. In that case the enemy flank was more and more likely to be found in the direction of Vilna-Minsk. A big German advance between Grodno-Kovno would not be sufficiently effective in itself. We should find ourselves in a *cul-de-sac*. It seemed more advisable, in the first instance, to take Kovno by a direct attack of the Tenth Army from the west, and a

simultaneous enveloping movement by the Niemen Army from the north. Once this fortress had fallen, the corner-stone of the Russian defense on the Niemen, the road to Vilna and to the rear of the Russian forces would be open. They would then have to retreat with all possible speed. If the Niemen Army and the Tenth Army could receive even small reinforcements at the right moment and be supplied with sufficient transportation, it was to be hoped that they could fall on the northern flank of the retreating host, *via* Vilna, with such force that the summer campaign of 1915 would end in a decisive defeat of the Russian armies. The harder we pressed our advance from East Galicia into the area east of the Bug the more likely were we to achieve this success.

In pursuance of this idea the Niemen Army was reinforced by the 41st Infantry Division, 76th Reserve Division, and the 4th Cavalry Division of the Eighth Army.

The attack on Kovno was facilitated by the fact that, in mid-May, after a Russian advance on Schaki from the woods to the west of Kovno had been repulsed, our line in these woods had been so far advanced that it was possible to bring our heaviest artillery into position. The Russian advance took us by surprise, and made considerable progress at first toward the frontier. It was impossible to tell whether it was the forerunner of a heavier move against the weak north wing of the Tenth Army. The Headquarters Staff of this army quickly concentrated near Wilkowischki several divisions under General Beckmann, who very soon drove back the enemy. We experienced a certain amount of relief when the situation became easier at that point. General Beckmann subsequently crossed the Niemen, where he was placed in command of the army of that name.

The preparations for the operations against Kovno were just about to be begun when His Majesty commanded the Field-Marshal and me to go to Posen for July 1. Here, at the suggestion of the Chief of the General Staff, and after having heard the Field-Marshal's proposals, the Kaiser decided that the Polish offensive should be continued, and, in particular, that the Twelfth Army should break through the enemy line facing it, and push on to the Narew, while the Ninth Army and General von Woyrsch should advance toward the Vistula. The allied armies were also to continue the advance between the Bug and the Vistula.

Our General Staff believed that in these operations part of the Russian forces still in the bend of the Vistula could be annihilated. I had to keep my views to myself and hope that the movement I wanted made would be carried out when General von Gallwitz had reached the Narew and found that he also could make progress only by means of frontal attacks. I thought that even then there would still be time to put it into execution. The advance of our line in Lithuania and Courland by the troops already there might serve as a favorable introduction to the operation. But we had to abandon any idea of getting the reinforcements hitherto earmarked for Courland, and taking Kovno.

#### IV

In accordance with the instructions from General Headquarters, preparations for the crossing of the Narew were now begun on an extensive scale. Not only the Twelfth Army, but the right wing of the Eighth Army also were got into position, so that the Twelfth Army should advance between the Vistula and the Schkwa with Pultusk-Roshan as their objective,

and the Eighth Army should reach the river between the Schkwa and the mouth of the Pissa.

General von Gallwitz decided to make his opening move on either side of Prasnysz. For this attack he had at his disposal: 1st Army Corps, with the 2d and 37th Infantry Divisions; 13th Army Corps, with the 3d and 26th Infantry Divisions and 4th Guard Division; 17th Army Corps, with the 35th and 36th Infantry Divisions and the 1st Guard Reserve Division; 11th Army Corps, with the 38th Infantry Division and Von Wernitz's Division; 17th Reserve Corps, with Von Breugel's Division, the 14th Landwehr Division, and Dickhuth's Corps.

General von Scholtz attacked with the 75th Reserve Division and the 10th Landwehr Division.

In preparation for the attack we had concentrated, especially in the area of the Twelfth Army, what was then for the Eastern front a very large amount of heavy artillery.

Both armies began the attack on July 13. Thanks to the careful organization by the Army Headquarters Staff and the excellent spirit of the troops, it was entirely successful.

General von Gallwitz's divisions gained ground, got right into the enemy's system of defenses, and continued to press forward. On the 15th, after heavy fighting, a strong rear-guard position was stormed, and by the 17th the Narew had been reached, while the right wing had arrived northwest of Novo Georgievsk. The Field-Marshal and I were present with the Twelfth Army at the battle on the 13th and 14th; we were most favorably impressed by both leaders and troops. The Twelfth Army, like the Eleventh Army in West Galicia, had gained a great deal of ground in the first attack.

On the Narew, as had been the case on the San, a



pause in the operations now ensued. Pultusk and Roshan were stormed on July 23. Ostrolenka was taken on August 4, and thus the crossing of the Narew on a wide front was made. Other forces moved against Sieroc and Segershe, so that as soon as these works were taken Novo Georgievsk could be cut off from the northeast.

The Eighth Army, in line with the Twelfth, had reached the Narew between the Schkwa and the Pissa, but had managed to place only a weak force on the southern bank of the river near the confluence of the Schkwa.

The Russians offered stubborn resistance everywhere and suffered very heavy losses.

The Ninth Army and General von Woyrsch's detachment had also gone forward in the Polish bend of the Vistula. Von Woyrsch's detachment had beaten the Russians on the Ilshanka and near Radom, occupied Radom on July 19, and forced the Russians to retreat behind the Vistula. As a consequence of this, on July 21 the Russians north of the Pilica also retreated behind the Vistula and the outer defenses of Warsaw. The Ninth Army, which was still weak, now advanced to attack this position. Its further mission was to cut off Novo Georgievsk from the south.

Between the upper Bug and the Vistula the allied armies gained further ground to the north in successive frontal attacks.

Far from the great battle-field in Poland, the Niemen Army had also started an offensive in the middle of July, and made great progress eastward.

I was now quite convinced that the time had come to initiate the movement I had recommended, a movement on the lower Niemen against Kovno, followed by an attack in full force in the rear of the Russian armies. The troops could be taken from Von

Woyrsch's detachment and the Ninth, Twelfth, and Eighth Armies. We had delays quite long enough already. The taking of Kovno would take time, and the Russian retreat in Galicia was already far advanced. But it seemed still possible to achieve great things, at any rate something bigger than could be effected by the operations then in progress. These could end in nothing more than a pure frontal west-east retirement of the enemy.

General Headquarters stuck to its point of view, and still preferred the movement over the Vistula and Narew. We were not allowed to weaken the armies engaged in that operation for the benefit of the Tenth and Niemen Armies. A new division from the West was assigned to both the Twelfth and the Eighth Armies by General Headquarters. Whether our General Staff, for reasons connected with the general military situation, no longer wished to embark upon such an extensive and far-reaching plan as that we had suggested, it is impossible for me to say.

The Ninth, Twelfth, and Eighth Armies continued to advance on the same lines as before and in the strength settled upon by General Headquarters. Preparations for the attack of Novo Georgievsk were begun. At the same time we decided to take Kovno and the Niemen Army continue its attacks if all went well.

## V

As I had expected, the operations of the allied armies in Poland to the east of the Vistula meant purely frontal pressure on the enemy and incessant fighting. Repeated efforts to envelop the Russians ended in failure. The Russian armies were certainly kept on the move, but they escaped. They frequently made fierce counter-attacks with strong forces, and again and

again took advantage of the many marshy areas in the neighborhood of rivers and streams to rally and offer prolonged resistance. Owing to the continuous movement for many weeks on bad roads and, generally speaking, in bad weather, the strain on our troops was tremendous. Clothing and boots were in rags and tatters. Supply was difficult. It was almost impossible to find billets, as the Russians systematically destroyed or burned stores and villages. They drove the cattle before them and left them to die on the highroad. The people whom they carried off with them were driven into the swamps at the sides of the road if they blocked the way. Many scenes in the Russian campaign have been indelibly printed on my memory.

The supply and transport conditions became more unfavorable from day to day, especially with the Twelfth Army, which was getting farther and farther away from its rail-head. Communications with the rear were improved for the Eighth Army after the capture of Lomza-Osowiec. It was then possible, but still very difficult, to send supplies from that side. What vehicles we had were principally employed in bringing up ammunition. In attack our exhausted infantry required more support from the artillery the farther east it got. As the distances increased, the difficulty in bringing up ammunition increased proportionately. Thus the movement slowed down and lost its sting.

After the conclusion of peace with Russia, a high Russian officer told me he had never been able to understand why we had not pushed on with greater vigor, since if we had the Russian Army would have gone to pieces. Officers and men did everything in their power to bring about that result, but when perfect discipline, the greatest enthusiasm, and the most strenuous efforts on the part of every individual can-

not stave off the stage of exhaustion, the will of the commander is equally powerless.

We built a branch line from Willenberg *via* Chorshele to Ostrolenka, and repaired the other lines as quickly as possible, but the lines of communication became longer and longer; they far exceeded the one hundred and twenty kilometers which we had regarded as the extreme limit. The Entente was better off during its big attacks in the summer of 1918. It had numerous railway connections running direct from behind its front line, and was able to bring up its enormous supply of munitions continuously, and thus support its infantry effectively. Motor transport enabled the infantry to recuperate in good, well-furnished billets, and return to the line again and again with renewed vigor.

Operations continued in accordance with the plans of the General Staff. At the end of July Cholm and Lublin fell into our hands. Farther east we were not making much progress, and thus gave the Russians time to withdraw troops from the salient we were making in their line, and send them south to form a new front.

General von Woyrsch took the western bridge-head of Ivangorod, and on July 28 crossed the Vistula to the north of this point under the enemy's nose, and was heavily attacked. I thought this crossing very hazardous. Tactically it succeeded, but it did not alter the general strategic situation.

The Russians facing the Ninth Army withdrew from the outer defenses of Warsaw, and early in August from Warsaw itself.

On August 5 the Ninth Army occupied the capital of Poland. This army was taken out of our command and placed under the direct orders of General Headquarters. Field-Marshal Prince Leopold of Bavaria was, at the same time, put in command of Von Woyrsch's

detachment. No doubt General Headquarters had its own good reasons for thus reorganizing the commands, but it did not simplify matters for me, especially as the lines of communication of the Ninth Army remained under our control. The movements of the Ninth and Twelfth Armies were very closely related. General Headquarters was far too busy for me to venture to trouble it with such details.

The capture of Warsaw gave us special satisfaction. We had fought so hard for it in the autumn of 1914. In that campaign were laid the foundations of the present successes, of which the occupation of Warsaw was the sign and symbol.

During the following days Field-Marshal Prince Leopold of Bavaria's army group crossed the Vistula between Ivangorod and Warsaw on a wide front. Once again General Headquarters attempted to effect an enveloping movement by directing this detachment straight on Brest-Litovsk, while strong Russian forces were still north of Lublin. But in vain; the Russians got away. While Field-Marshal von Mackensen was struggling toward Brest-Litovsk, Prince Leopold's group was advanced to the Bug below the fortress.

After the crossing of the Narew by the Twelfth Army at the end of July, General von Gallwitz had cast his eyes due south toward the Bug. As I had feared and General von Gallwitz had also thought possible, these hopes were not fulfilled. Somewhere about the 10th, the Twelfth Army received instructions to march east, with the right wing moving up the Bug. In this way it came into close touch with the Eighth Army, which, after the fall of Ostrolenka on August 5, had gained more ground on the southern bank of the Narew, and was now advancing with Lomza as its objective.

In the mean time Sieroc and Segershe had fallen, also Dombe; Novo Georgievsk had been cut off from

all sides. The capture of this fortress was intrusted by the Field-Marshal to General von Beseler. The troops of the Ninth and Twelfth Armies investing Novo Georgievsk were placed under his command. He also received a considerable number of the heaviest Austro-Hungarian howitzers.

The plans for the capture of Novo Georgievsk, the direction of the Eighth and Tenth Armies, the attack on Kovno, and the situation in Lithuania and Courland made further great demands on myself and my staff. Although we had not the same free hand in conducting the operations of the summer campaign of 1915 as in previous campaigns, but followed the plans laid down by instructions of General Headquarters, there still remained an enormous amount of work for me to do, and the necessity of forming and executing a number of decisions, both great and small. Added to this there were differences of opinion with General von Falkenhayn, such as are only too likely to occur between men of independent views, but which made it more than ever incumbent upon me to carry out most punctiliously the plans of General Headquarters, which were opposed to mine, rather than my own or those that coincided with mine.

## VI

The capture of Novo Georgievsk did not directly affect the progress of the operations. It was an independent operation, taking place in the rear of the armies pushing on eastward. General von Beseler, the conqueror of Antwerp, and Colonel von Sauberzweig, his extremely energetic Chief of Staff, guaranteed that there should be no question of a so-called siege with all its attendant complications. A mere investment of Novo Georgievsk would be enough to bring about its fall. The garrison of eighty thousand could

not hold out for long. It is astonishing that the Grand Duke should have let it come to this, whereas, later on, Brest-Litovsk and Grodno were evacuated. He ought to have told himself that it was impossible to hold the fortress, and that the condition of the fortifications was not good enough to withstand heavy high-angle fire.

General von Beseler decided to attack the north-eastern forts. The Mława-Ciechanov-Nasielsk Railway, which had been restored some time previously, indicated the direction from this side. The main object was to make the distance to be traveled by road as short as possible for the artillery and ammunition supplies being sent up by rail, so as to avoid the waste of time involved in making field and light railways. The strength of the front was of no importance, for a plentiful supply of heavy shells put the attack on equal terms. The artillery was brought up as soon as the railway had been completed as far as Nasielsk.

On August 9 the investment was completed, and soon afterward the artillery and ammunition supplies were established in position. By the middle of August the batteries were able to open fire. Its effect did not appear satisfactory. The voices of those wise after the event were now raised to say that nothing could be done with the curtailed-attack method; what had been right in one case was wrong in the other. This vacillation was soon overcome. Under continuous fire the northeastern works were stormed and taken. Then followed the attack along the whole front to the north of the Vistula. Our troops, which were mainly composed of Landsturm and Landwehr forces, behaved extremely well, and Novo Georgievsk fell on August 19.

Soon afterward His Majesty the Kaiser inspected the fortress and thanked the troops. The Field-Marshal and I were commanded to be present. I was thus able

to see for myself the devastating effects of the heavy artillery fire and the poor construction of the works.

The troops released by this event were sent to the Tenth Army, with the concurrence of General Headquarters, and this force thus received the reinforcements it required, unfortunately very late in the day. The heaviest batteries were to be sent against Grodno. Kovno had already fallen.

By the end of August the Russian General Government of Poland had fallen completely into the hands of the allies. As before, Germany and Austria-Hungary shared the administration. The frontier on the west of the Vistula was formed by the Pilica, and on the east it more or less followed the lower Wieprz. We formed a German General Government of Warsaw under General von Beseler, and the Austrian establishment, a Military Government of Lublin. The partition was injurious to the common interest of the allies; many imperatively necessary measures were wrecked on it.

The Commander-in-chief in the East had had the administration of occupied Poland in his hands since the autumn of 1914. He now made way for General von Beseler, and had more than enough administrative cares in the northeast instead.

Novo Georgievsk will possibly prove the last ring fortress to be taken after investment. Not that I believe in disarmament. The world will very soon learn its lesson in regard to that delusion. However much it may be regretted, mankind will never come to that. But the day of the ring fortress is past. It cannot stand against modern artillery and its scale of munitionment, and must give place to something else. Land fortifications will soon be necessary, but they will assume the character of long fortified lines on the frontier.



## VII

When, on August 10, the Twelfth Army received instructions to march with the right wing up the Bug, on the west, it was in the rear of the Eighth Army, which was advancing on either side of the Narew against Lomza. I endeavored to maintain this echelon as the advance progressed, in order to make use of the possibilities of mutual co-operation on the flanks. But by degrees the two armies came up level with their inner wings on the Ostrolenka-Lapy Railway. South of the Bug Field-Marshal Prince Leopold's army group had moved forward to correspond.

The Commander-in-chief in the East had to see to the tactical details for the advance, which were unimportant, having regard to the campaign as a whole. Lieutenant-Colonel Hoffmann and I had frequent intercourse with the armies. The two chiefs of staff, Colonel Marquard and Major Count Schwerin, were excellent soldiers, who gave effective support to their Commander-in-chief.

On August 9 Lomza was taken from the southwest. For some time past we had had a squadron of bombing aeroplanes at our disposal in East Prussia. The forts in which an enemy corps or army staff had its quarters were often bombed. Splendid results had been reported; but when I was able to have the damage inspected it was impossible to verify it. In the interest of the troops I was glad of this, as they were able to use the forts as billets. It was only later that our bombs became effective, when the airmen took more interest in bombing work.

As the advance progressed it became evident that Mackensen's and Prince Leopold's army groups were pushing north, and thus forcing the Twelfth and Eighth Armies to the left. On August 18 Field-Marshal von

Mackensen had arrived before Brest-Litovsk, Prince Leopold of Bavaria was approaching the Bialowieser forest, and the Twelfth Army, Bialystok, the former seat of the excellent Prussian administration of New East Prussia at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries. The Eighth Army pressed forward toward Grodno in the narrow space between Bialystok and the Narew, so as to capture Osowiec from the south. This fortress was invested on August 22. We had intended taking it from the east and north, yet we took it from the south. Such is war.

In the latter days of August both armies continued the advance in a more northeasterly direction beyond the Bialystok-Osowiec line, the Twelfth Army marching north of Wolkowysk, and the Eighth Army on Grodno. Both these armies, therefore, were gradually losing touch, tactically, with the two Southern army groups, which after the investment of Brest-Litovsk on August 25-26 marched on toward Pinsk and Baranovici. By degrees they came within the sphere of the operations which were in preparation farther north.

At the beginning of September, the Eighth and Twelfth Armies reached the region of Grodno, south-east thereof. In a fortnight's time or so they were to be at Lida, north of the Niemen. About eight weeks would then have elapsed since the offensive started. During this operation the Twelfth Army had had to make a wide detour to the south. How much better would it have been if, instead of this movement, an attack on the Lomza-Grodno line had been possible! That could not be done. But an operation to the north of Grodno, combined with the taking of Kovno, would have reached this point much more quickly and easily, and have been far more effective if it had been carried out in full strength, even as late as the first fortnight in August.

For a time it looked as though General Headquarters wished to suspend the advance in the East. It transferred large portions of Field-Marshal von Mackensen's army, and later of the Twelfth and Eighth Armies, too, to West and South Hungary. But it allowed the operations which had been begun after the taking of Kovno and our advance in Lithuania and Courland to take their course.

### VIII

The storming of Kovno was an intrepid stroke. In order to accomplish it troops had to be withdrawn from the center and right wing of the Tenth Army, which already held a very long front. Only thus were we able to concentrate a comparatively strong force for the attack west of Kovno. The Commander-in-chief in the East and General von Eichhorn made themselves responsible for this strain on the rest of their front. The general had often complained to me that the Tenth Army had remained inactive so long, and he now set about his new task with zest. He and his Chief of Staff, Colonel Hell, were men of great self-confidence and daring. General von Eichhorn was an officer of brilliant intellectual qualities, and had trained his troops in an exemplary manner.

The reinforced 40th Army Corps, under General von Litzmann, was to carry out the attack.

The General was extremely impetuous and his influence on the men was very great. He had laid the foundations of his military fame in the course of the break through at Brsheshiny on November 22-25, 1914. He once wrote against the Guard Officers' Corps, but he recognized on this occasion what a power this Officers' Corps stood for. I myself am proud of having been an infantryman of the line, and in the 8th Regi-

ment of the Leib-Grenadiers I learned to know a unit whose Officers' Corps had a special tradition handed down, as in the Guards Officers' Corps. Such traditions are quite justifiable, but they should not lead to favoritism and vanity; when that occurs they arouse resentment and should be discarded.

The attack on Kovno was rendered more difficult by the lack of the heaviest howitzers. Such as had been supplied by General Headquarters at the end of July had to be used at Novo Georgievsk. All we got was a few additional batteries, which could be brought into position by light railways and the range of which was only short. But we allowed no difficulties to deter us and we built the railways. A broad survey of the position made it clear that the attack could be made only between the Wirballen-Kovno Railway and the Niemen. The right wing of the attacking troops was always very seriously threatened, and the menace increased the more ground we gained. At any moment the Russians might rake its flank very effectively with their artillery. The left wing was covered to the north by a Landsturm brigade, which during the offensive of the Niemen Army had been pushed forward across the Dubissa as far as the northwest works of Kovno.

By the beginning of August the railways were ready. There was now a lack of ammunition for the heavy field-howitzers. I gave up my reserve, for the Director of Field Ordnance in the East, Lieutenant-Colonel Rostock, always had something in hand. So at last, on August 8, after much trouble, everything was ready and the attack could begin. No fortress has ever been attacked with such scanty material, but the troops entrusted with the work were inspired by the gallant spirit of their commander.

At this time, as I mentioned before, the Russians were still close to the Vistula opposite Warsaw.

On August 6 the infantry in the assembly positions had got up close, in order to obtain better artillery observation. On the 8th the bombardment began. During the next few days a number of strong positions had to be stormed. The vigor of the attack appeared to be waning, but General von Litzmann continued to work his way along the line of forts until the 15th. Luckily the Russians proved to be incapable of withstanding the fire of the heavy artillery. A fresh attack, by a company which had joined the other troops, succeeded on the 16th in breaking through the western line of forts. On the 17th General von Litzmann crossed the Niemen and took the town and the eastern forts. The booty was not so great as at the taking of Novo Georgievsk, for it was not a case of storming a fortress which had been previously invested. The garrison had a way out in the rear, and was in touch with the Russian forces on the Eastern front. I have never been able to find out why that army did not help them, or whether the speedy fall of the works took it by surprise.

All the bridges, including the very important railway bridge, and also the tunnel on the east bank, had been destroyed, the latter, fortunately, not completely. It was soon restored. We were thus to a certain extent able to open a line of communications east of the Niemen in the direction of Vilna, even before the railway bridge was ready. It was a vital matter for the troops that it should be put in working order again if the operations were to progress as we hoped.

The town of Kovno was saved, with the exception of the factories; these had been burned down and the population had fled. I had an opportunity of seeing how difficult it was for the troops to find billets without the co-operation of the inhabitants.

Immediately after the taking of Kovno, General von Eichhorn sent General von Litzmann and his advance-

guard on toward the Vilna Railway, and himself took the troops next in line across the Niemen. At the same time he directed the rest of the Tenth Army, the 21st Army Corps, under General von Hutier, to push on with Olita as their main objective, and lighter forces to advance through Augustovo forest toward Grodno. These forces co-operated very closely with the advancing Eighth Army, with which they were almost level.

General von Eichhorn intended to force the crossing of the Niemen along the whole line, an operation which fitted into the framework of our plans. It was entirely in accordance with our views. If, on the one hand, much remained to be done, especially where the armies were close together, on the other, in other directions the armies did much by independent decisions to facilitate the direction of the whole. Their sole duty was to report in good time their view of the situation and what they wished to do. The junction of two armies is always a point where friction is inevitable. On the Eastern front, especially in trench warfare, this was not so obvious as it was subsequently on the Western front. The boundary lines there sometimes developed into high walls, which one could look only along, but not over. One of the most important duties of the Higher Command was to level this wall and insure that the points of junction did not become weak points tactically.

The center and right wing of the Tenth Army advanced, but with heavy fighting. Under pressure of events at Kovno the Russians had completely destroyed the railways and bridges over the Niemen, abandoned the left bank, and withdrawn in the direction of Orany. By August 26 the 21st Army Corps had taken Olita. By the end of August the Tenth Army had crossed the Niemen and was slowly advancing toward the Grodno-

Vilna Railway. Before it reached the railway it met with very strong resistance, which was too much for it at first. The Russians began to bring up reinforcements from eastern to northern Poland.

The tactical results of the advance of the Tenth Army across the Niemen in the direction of Grodno were small, owing to the vast region of forest to the northeast of that fortress. But the Russians had become nervous. They abandoned Grodno with amazing speed when the right wing of the Tenth Army, and more particularly the Eighth Army, began their attack. On September 1 General von Scholtz, with the 75th Reserve Division, took the southwest forts of the town, and the town itself was occupied on the 2d, after violent street fighting. But on the Kotra and its northern tributary from Lake Osjery, not far east of Grodno, he came up against strong enemy resistance.

The siege artillery was no longer needed and was placed at the disposal of General Headquarters.

General von Gallwitz reached the Svislosz, fighting all the way. Prince Leopold of Bavaria's army group had traversed the Bialowieser forest, which, by the way, was not an impassable swamp, but well provided with roads. Farther south the troops were still advancing on Pinsk.

## IX

Up to that time the engagements of the Niemen Army during the months of July and August had been directly connected with the main operations only in so far as they had drawn enemy forces in their direction. There was, of course, a tactical co-operation on the Niemen between the inner wings of the Tenth and the Niemen Army. With the attack on Kovno this co-operation became closer, and at the taking of the fortress led to their fighting on the same field of battle;

it then relaxed again. From now onward the connection of these armies was to take a prominent part in the operations.

Gen. Otto von Below was fighting in a distinct and separate area, and his actions therefore were more independent than those of the other commanders, who were fighting on narrow sectors. We were able to confine ourselves to giving general instructions for the conduct of the campaign.

Since the middle of July the Niemen Army had held the line of the Dubissa to southwest of Shavli, and of the Wenta and Windau from Hasenpot down to the coast. At the beginning of the operations General von Below was ordered to make an enveloping attack on the strong enemy forces near Shavli, and, after securing his left against attack from the direction of Riga, to push east, north of the Niemen. These operations were in particularly good hands. General von Below, who had already been regarded in peacetime as an unusually efficient and self-reliant officer, had led his troops with great prudence and foresight during the battle of Tannenberg, and distinguished himself in the battle of the Masurian Lakes by the effective disposition of his forces. Field-Marshal von Hindenburg held his manly and upright character in high esteem, and in November suggested to His Majesty that he should take over the command of the Eighth Army, although he was among the most junior generals in the service to hold such a command. General von Below had fully justified the confidence placed in him by his Commander-in-chief. His Chief of Staff, General von Böckmann, had long been on the General Staff, and during the war had proved himself to be a good leader of troops and to have the makings of a good chief of staff. The two men worked together in complete harmony. At headquarters at Lötzen we could



feel confident that, with the forces at its disposal, it would exploit to the full the possibilities of the operations north of the Niemen.

The communications of the Niemen Army were a difficult problem. The standard-gauge railway ceased at Laugzargen, northeast of Tilsit, and Memel. The Niemen, although navigable, could be used only to bring up troops and supplies for the right wing of the army, and the traffic control was so poor that it could not be relied upon. An attempt to tow the troops, so urgently required to reinforce the right wing, in barges up the river proved a failure. The string of barges ran aground on sand-banks on the Russian side of the river.

Libau could be used only with the greatest caution as a base of supplies. At that time the Russian fleet and English submarines dominated the eastern part of the Baltic. Nevertheless, with the material we had found there, we managed to maintain an inadequate service on the railway running east from Libau. We very soon began to build a light railway between Laugzargen-Tauroggen-Kielmy, but it made slow progress, owing to the shortage of labor. When our plans for a large operation began to mature we had to develop a more complete network of railways. The shortest connection with the Russian railways ran from Memel to Prekultn, east of Libau. The construction of this stretch of line was begun, but had to be stopped again when the High Command had to give up labor companies for the building of the Willenberg-Ostrolenka Railway. By the beginning of July the railway to Prekultn was completed; it was of inestimable value, although its working still left much to be desired. The Libau-Moscheiki Railway was now patched up. Subsequently we also established a connection *via* Koshedary, east of Kovno, with the network of rail-

ways in Lithuania. At last we began the construction of the Taugoggen - Radzivilishki main line (southeast of Shavli). The wooden bridge over the Dubissa is said to have been a work of art.

About the middle of July, after the arrival of the reinforcements which had been despatched in June, the grouping of the Niemen Army was completed. Army Headquarters was bitterly disappointed because, owing to the attack on the Narew, it did not receive the quota of troops it had hoped for. It adhered to its original plan of operation notwithstanding. The line of the Dubissa as far as Kielmy was not very strongly held. The 1st Reserve Corps was concentrated for attack between Kielmy and Shavli. The line of the Windau was also lightly held to the point where it joined a strong sector north of the Libau Railway. Here there were two or three infantry and as many cavalry divisions.

On July 14, when, in North Poland, Prasnysz had just fallen, and farther south the Russians were still west of the Vistula and south of Lublin-Cholm, General von Below crossed the Windau with the intention of enveloping the strong Russian forces near Shavli by an advance from the north in the direction of Mitau, and pressing forward from the southeast with the 1st Reserve Corps. The weak center was to hold its ground. The right wing of the army on the Dubissa was to stand by for the time being, and to join in the operations only after some progress had been made.

Apparently the Russians had not expected an attack, nor had they discovered this extension of the line to the north. In the direction of Okmjany they attacked the 6th Reserve Division, advancing in the center, and forced it to withdraw to the west. But their right flank was threatened to such an extent that they were unable to follow up this success.

By the 17th the infantry divisions on the left wing had beaten the Russians at Autz, but, owing to what had occurred to the 6th Reserve Division, they had to be brought back south. In consequence of this the enveloping movement was not effective. In the course of continuous fighting, which lasted until July 23, these operations, which became known as the "Battle of Shavli," ended with the retreat of the Fifth Russian Army beyond Shavli toward Ponieviesh. Portions of it got away, as the German cavalry in their rear was short of artillery. Ponieviesh was occupied by us on July 29. On the left wing the cavalry reached out to the Bay of Riga and joined up with the infantry advancing on Mitau, which was taken on August 1. Farther south the Dubissa was crossed, and by July 29 the Kovno-Ponieviesh line had been occupied.

Communication had now to be established once more and the troops supplied with ammunition. Supply columns had been sent in great numbers to the Twelfth and Eighth Armies, and the Niemen Army was correspondingly short. Their further advance now began to slow down. On the day on which Kovno was taken the troops were on the banks of the Svienta and the Shara. Here there was a long halt, while the left wing pushed forward toward the Dvina. To the south of Riga the Russians were holding an important bridge-head, which was to be a thorn in our flesh for a long time to come. On the other hand, early in September the Dvina was reached between Uxküll and Friedrichstadt, and the enemy thrown back to the opposite bank.

Meanwhile the Russians had been reinforced. The weak forces of the Niemen Army were distributed over a very wide area, so that, for the time being, they were unable to advance farther without reinforcement. They were in touch with the left wing of the Tenth

Army, as the latter, after the taking of Kovno, again encountered strong enemy forces half-way to Vilna.

An attempt by the fleet in the Bay of Riga, on August 8, had no influence on the operations on land.

The rapid advance of the Niemen Army showed that still more could be done if the forces had been stronger and better equipped, especially in regard to supply columns.

## X

In the second half of August the idea of continuing operations east of the Niemen had assumed more definite shape. The attack on the flank of the retreating army from Poland could be carried out, if at all, only in the direction of Kovno-Vilna-Minsk. This attack was to be carried out by the Tenth Army, while the Eighth and Twelfth Armies and the Southern Army groups were to keep up the pressure on the enemy.

The operations of the Tenth Army required that its flank should be protected on the north from attack from the railway from Riga to Dvinsk, which is a junction for several lines from the northeast and east, and also from any movement from the Polotzk-Molodetchno and Orscha-Borissov-Minsk lines. The Niemen Army was to continue its advance with Dvinsk as the objective, while a strong contingent of cavalry advanced toward the two railway lines mentioned above.

According to this plan, the Russian front facing the Tenth and Niemen Armies, which, although unbroken, was weak to the northeast of Kovno, would be pierced—that is, it would be forced back through Vilna to Dvinsk, while the cavalry divisions advanced on Polotzk-Minsk.

The question remained whether the operations would still be profitable now that the Russians had

retreated so far to the east. There was no doubt that every day's delay made the prospects less promising. I considered whether we should not content ourselves with a thrust through Olita-Orany on Lida. I rejected this idea, because all similar endeavors during the preceding summer campaign to accomplish an out-flanking movement had been unsuccessful. Accordingly, I still pinned my faith to the bigger scheme, because its success would bring a more substantial reward. In this case also we were compelled to take a leap in the dark. It was clear that the Tenth Army needed reinforcements, and the troops which had been investing Novo Georgievsk were employed for this purpose.

The Eighth and Twelfth Armies had, in the course of the operations, become so concentrated that it was possible to withdraw divisions, in addition to those already earmarked for the West. They were conveyed to Kovno, and thence they were assigned to the left wing of the Tenth or the right wing of the Eighth Army.

Meanwhile the Tenth Army had been heavily attacked from Vilna. The enemy had brought reinforcements from Poland to the north. In the hope of turning the enemy's flank, the Tenth Army, like the troops it confronted, had been reinforced on the north in the direction of Vilkomir. The fighting was particularly heavy on the northern bank of the Vilia.

We passed once more through a period of great anxiety. I would have gladly expedited the early stages of the operations, but the capacity of the Wirballen-Kovno Railway was limited, owing to its unfinished condition. Everything took an endless time, and in addition to this the roads were bad and the troops were no longer fresh.

At last, on September 9, the advance began. The

Niemen Army made good progress toward Dvinsk-Jakobstadt. Near Uzjany their right wing advanced along the Kovno-Dvinsk road and very soon drove the enemy back beyond Novo Alexandrovsk. The enemy made a stand at both bridge-heads and the fighting here was long and severe.

The left wing of the Tenth Army, south of Vilkomir, made good progress on the first two days toward the Vilia above Vilna. Farther on, however, they were able to force the Russians back across this river only by degrees.

Between the inner wings of the two armies, from Dvinsk to the Vilia, the cavalry divisions had more room to maneuver. In the first place, they had to fight their way through the lake country between Vilkomir and Sventziany, which was taken on the 13th. From here the divisions were diverted toward Smorgon, Molodetchno, and the Molodetchno-Polotzk railway, half-way between the two places. It was now possible to bring up the cavalry divisions of the Eighth Army. The Vilna-Molodetchno-Polotzk railway near Smorgon and Vileika and east of Glubokoie had been reached by the 14th, and the Russian right wing on the Vilia, northeast of Vilna, seriously threatened. The Orscha-Minsk Railway was also cut in the neighborhood of Borissov. Here, as had so often occurred in the east, the cavalry found a new field for its activities. The German cavalry has everywhere given proof of its brilliant dash and courage.

The Tenth made repeated efforts to transfer troops from its front to the left wing. For this purpose it made a detour up the Vilia to Smorgon, and south of the Vishniev to Vileika. The movements were difficult to carry out, and took up a great deal of time; they imposed a tremendous strain on the troops, for the roads and weather were bad and hindered progress.

The infantry divisions were not able to relieve the cavalry divisions quickly enough in their foremost positions. With their weak artillery they were unable permanently to hold Smorgon. The latter place was recaptured on the 19th by forces from Vilna after a plucky resistance on the part of the 1st Cavalry Division.

The Russians had realized the danger which threatened them, and had brought up reinforcements by rail to the region east of Dvinsk; these reinforcements very soon made their appearance to the south of that town. The railway *via* Polotzk to Molodetchno was not used. From Lida and Slonim, on the other hand, they were able to wheel and effect a wholesale withdrawal in the direction of Molodetchno with their infantry, and toward Dokschitz with their cavalry. The great retreat along the Russian front from Poland into West Russia had, unfortunately, progressed so far that their troops which had been brought up north were able to reach the Vilia in time. The German enveloping movement came to a standstill here. Its strength was insufficient to overcome the enemy resistance. The Russians, for their part, crossed the Vilia north of Molodetchno for a counter-attack, but were also unable to make progress. In the mean time the German frontal attack had made but slow progress. The Russians were not able to hold Vilna against this pressure, and retired slowly, fighting along the whole front. The German front at Busswece had still enough force in it to reach the region west of Smorgon, the western Beresina and the neighborhood of Baranovici and Pinsk.

During the gradual advance from Vilna on Smorgon I saw clearly that the operations would have to be broken off. A continuation of the movement was out of the question. In the long run it was impossible to

keep the left wing of the Tenth Army so far forward in face of the hostile cavalry, which was pressing in increasing strength upon all sides to oppose our attempt to break through. We had to prepare our winter quarters and found good positions on the Vishniev-Narotch and Drysviaty Lakes line.

While fresh reinforcements joined the Niemen Army near Lake Drysviaty the north wing of the Tenth Army wheeled back into the positions mentioned above. The Tenth Army intended to check the advancing enemy, as had been done in a similar movement near Grodno, but it delayed overlong, and in the end was severely handled east of Lake Narotch.

The Russian flood surged against our new front, but the tempest gradually died down. Meanwhile the Austrian Army had attempted to execute an enveloping movement by breaking through northeast of Lutsk, but had been repulsed by a counter-attack. Near Dvinsk the fighting continued for a long time. The Niemen Army still hoped to take the bridge-head. But the communications were so bad that an offensive was out of the question, and therefore, at my desire, the operation was stopped.

Quiet reigned along the front as far as the Carpathians.

The summer campaign against Russia was at an end. The Russians had been defeated and their front forced back. The operations round Kovno had, not met with any great success, as they started too late. That was the principal reason. The enemy had been able to thwart the enveloping movement with which he was threatened on the Vilia. If he had been a few days' march farther west he would not have been in a position to do so.

Throughout the whole war we never succeeded, either on the Eastern or Western front, in exploiting a



big strategical break-through to the full. The one between Vilna and Dvinsk was nearest to succeeding. It showed that a strategical break-through yields its full reward only when it is followed up by a tactical envelopment. It was left for the Bulgarian Army in September 1918 to show to the world the momentous consequences of such an operation. These consequences, however, were possible only because of the utter collapse of that army.

The great anxiety of those September days had once again resulted only in a tactical success. We had had an unusually critical situation to contend with. The action fought by the 1st Cavalry Division near Smorgon on the enemy's line of retreat was immensely tragic. Just before the arrival of the infantry it was forced to retire with heavy losses. The situation on the south wing of the Niemen Army also continued to be precarious, and the rearward movement of the Tenth Army extremely dangerous. All this, however, was nothing to the nerve-racking suspense; could the infantry get forward fast enough on the bad roads to complete the envelopment which had been so skilfully begun by the cavalry division? Such suspense can be understood only by those who have actually experienced it.

We had brought the final overthrow of Russia one step nearer. The Grand Duke, with his strong personality, resigned, and the Tsar placed himself at the head of the army.

Our troops and their leaders had done their duty everywhere and the German soldier was justly convinced of his unquestionable superiority over the Russian. Numbers no longer had any terrors for him.

# THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ON THE EASTERN FRONT IN KOVNO, OCTOBER 1915 TO JULY 1916

The Period of Inactivity—The General Situation in Autumn 1915—Historical Memories—Consolidating the Front—The Country and the People—Duties of the Administration—The Area to Be Administered—The Organization of the Administrative System—The Battles and the Crisis in the East—Plans for the Campaign of 1916—Fighting at Lake Narotch—Operations Around the Lake—Russian Offensives—Conferences at General Headquarters.

(Maps X and XII)

## I

**A**FTER the cessation of the fighting to the north of Arras in May, quiet reigned everywhere on the Western front throughout the summer of 1915. At the end of September the Entente started a powerful offensive near Loos and in Champagne. The troops which had been transferred from the East arrived just in time to support the defenders of the Western front, who were holding out so gallantly, and avert a serious defeat.

The Italians had attacked repeatedly, but without success. The Austrian Army fought well against Italy; she was their hereditary foe, whereas the war against Russia aroused no national prejudices.

The German and Austrian General Staffs had decided upon the conquest of Serbia. Bulgaria, a natural enemy of Serbia, and hemmed in by Macedonia, declared herself openly on our side. The taking of Warsaw had made a particularly strong impression on her.

The Bulgarian contribution of twelve strong infantry divisions at once equalized the forces in the Balkans. Field-Marshal von Mackensen crossed the Danube at the beginning of October. By the beginning of December the Serbian campaign had brought us close to the Greek frontier. Consideration for Greece, the fatigue of the troops, and the state of our communications, perhaps also other political and military circumstances, unknown to me, prevented us from completing our operations with an attack on Salonica, where the first Entente troops were arriving to join in the fighting. The capture of Salonica would have considerably relieved our position in the Balkan Peninsula. It is clear to me, in the light of subsequent experience, that by such an operation we should not have gained even one Bulgarian for the Western front. The English, French, and Serbians, who afterward occupied the Macedonian front, would probably have fought against us in France. This consideration continued to weigh with us. The attack on Salonica was always a side-show, and must be regarded as such.

The Austrian troops pushed forward through Montenegro as far as the Vojusa in Albania, where the fighting lasted until February. The troops covering the flank of the Austro-Hungarian Army had advanced from the Danube far into Albania, even to the Greek frontier. The protection of this front was entrusted to Bulgarian troops, not only in their own interest, but also in that of Austria-Hungary and ourselves.

Most of the German troops returned by degrees to the Danube. Austria-Hungary also had fresh troops at her disposal. The Serbian Army was severely defeated, though remnants of it escaped in the direction of Valona, and, owing to the high-handed action of France and England at Corfu, became once more a factor in the struggle to be feared by the Bulgarian

soldier. They were transferred subsequently to Salonica, where they fought very creditably.

The Entente found itself forced to release drafts for Macedonia from other theaters of war. It also had to

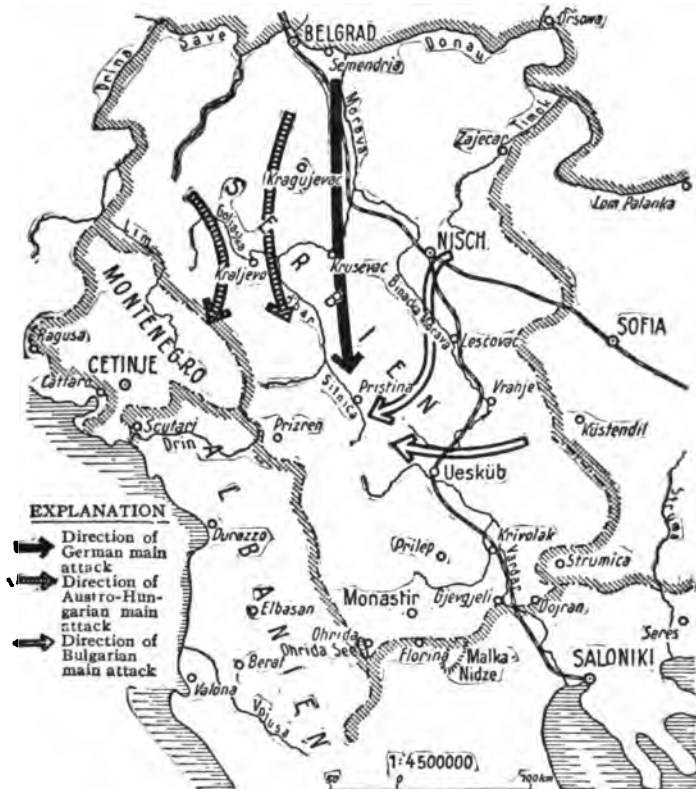


FIG. 5. CAMPAIGN IN SERBIA, 1915

abandon the idea of continuing the Gallipoli operations, which, thanks to the efficiency of German leadership and the Mediterranean division, had cost the Entente very dearly. The position of the Expeditionary Force had now become untenable. Communication with

Turkey was established by the defeat of Serbia and the alliance with Bulgaria. We were no longer obliged to smuggle our war material through Rumania; it was possible to give Turkey direct assistance. The railway running to Constantinople was opened on January 16. On January 8 and 9 the Entente troops evacuated the Gallipoli Peninsula.

The blockade of the Straits was assured. If the enemy fleets, by occupying the Straits, had commanded the Black Sea, Russia could have been supplied with the war materials of which she stood in such need. The fighting in the East would then have assumed a much more serious character. The Entente would have had access to the rich corn supplies of South Russia and Rumania and would have persuaded this kingdom to yield to its wishes even sooner than she actually did. Russia's communications with the outside world for the transport of war materials were, at that time, *via* the trans-Siberian railways, along the Murman coast, to which the railway from Petrograd was still in course of construction, but not yet completed, and, in summer, by the White Sea. The traffic through Finland with Sweden was important, but the latter would not permit the transport of war material. Sweden interpreted the duties of a neutral state correctly. These details clearly show the importance of the Straits, and therefore of Turkey, for the Eastern front and our whole military position.

Military operations in Asia Minor were a difficult matter. Turkey was entirely dependent on communications by road, whereas modern warfare requires communications either by rail or sea. The railway to the Caucasus had only just been begun between Angora and Sivas. The Bagdad Railway, broken by the mountain chains of Taurus and Amanus, had not nearly reached the Tigris. Tunnels were in course of con-

struction. The railway to Syria joined the Bagdad Railway at Aleppo—that is, beyond the intervening mountain barrier. South of Damascus it gave place to the narrow-gage Hedjaz Railway, with a branch line which traversed Palestine and came to an end at Beersheba, south of Jersusalem.

The state of the railways, which were bad enough in themselves, was made still worse by the conditions under which they were worked, for, as regards both personnel and materials, things could not have been worse. The railways served very little purpose, and did not in any way meet the necessities of the situation.

Endeavors were made, with some success, to use the Euphrates and the Tigris, but this made little difference to the general situation.

German motor transport helped to improve matters.

Owing to the difficulties of communication, a campaign in Asia Minor, Syria, and Mesopotamia was doomed to failure so long as transport conditions were not improved.

The military efficiency of the Turks in their frontier provinces was still further limited by the fact that the Kurds and Armenians on the Caucasus frontier, and the Arab tribes in Mesopotamia and Syria as far as Aden, were hostile to them. The Turks have always pursued an unhappy policy in regard to native populations. They have gone on the principle of taking everything and giving nothing. Now they had to reckon with these peoples as their enemies. By their unpardonable treatment of the Armenians the Turks deprived themselves even of labor, which they needed urgently, both for the building of railways and for agriculture.

The Turkish efforts to summon Tripoli and Benghazi to a holy war were only partially successful. Our

U-boats brought them arms, and to a certain extent maintained communication between those districts and Turkey.

An expedition against the Suez Canal in January-February 1915 was defeated. It could have been successful only if, at the same time, the Senussi had invaded Egypt from the west and the Egyptians themselves had risen. But these were Utopian ideas; English sovereignty is firmly established in those provinces which are in her power.

At the mouth of the Euphrates and Tigris, England, with her maritime communications, advanced step by step toward Bagdad. It had been impossible for the Turks to prevent this. In December 1915 fighting again took place round Kut-el-Amara below Bagdad, to which the English Expeditionary Force was, by this time, alarmingly close.

The Turkish Army on the Caucasus frontier had been defeated in the winter of 1914-15. It had been marking time since then. Nevertheless, it had suffered a high rate of wastage, chiefly owing to typhus and frost-bite.

The events in the Sinai Peninsula and Mesopotamia did not directly affect the Eastern front. The Suez expedition was followed with great interest and much hopefulness. The difficulties of communication,<sup>1</sup> to which I have referred above, were not fully realized by me at that time. In particular I was under the impression that the Bagdad Railway was better and farther advanced than was actually the fact. Whether more could have been done here it is impossible for me to say.

The fighting on the Caucasian front did not bring us the relief we had hoped for as regards Russia.

Owing to the occupation of vast regions in the East, the opening of the Balkan Peninsula and our through

communications with Turkey, our army administration had been greatly facilitated. Rumania had become much more accommodating as regards the delivery of supplies, as she was unable to dispose of her materials elsewhere. The year 1915 ended with a distinct advantage to us. We had strengthened our position for the coming year, but we did not by a long way get everything we could or ought to have expected from the home country.

Our enemies continued to increase their armaments.

In England Kitchener's army was developing. The greater part of it had, by this time, arrived on the Western front. The English front had extended southward and released French troops. Further divisions were being formed in England. Conscription had taken the place of voluntary recruiting. The English Conscription bill was passed in Parliament in January 1916. Thus England, the last European Power to do so, accepted the standpoint of the universal obligation of every able-bodied man to serve the State under arms, when required to do so by the necessities of war and the duties of citizenship. England did not extend the law to Ireland—a characteristic touch.

The French Army had kept up its original strength. The Serbian Army was being reorganized. Russia, to make good her losses, had made great inroads on her vast man-power.

The transformation of the peace-time industries of France, England, Japan, and America had made decided progress.

The year 1916 was to witness some terrific fighting.

In this great drama of historical events operations on the Eastern front, which since November 1914 had been an important and frequently the decisive theater, receded into the background. The work we now had to do was of a less active kind.



## II

At the close of the great operations the circumstances under which the Eastern armies were living were makeshift and unsatisfactory in every respect; further, conditions in the territory we had occupied in the course of events had to be improved.

In order to get a better grasp of affairs and be in closer touch with the troops, we went to Kovno at the end of October.

The Field-Marshal, the officers of the General Staff, and I were quartered in two villas belonging to Herr Tillmann, a German whose family name was in good repute among the Germans in Russia. He himself had been in Germany from the beginning of the war. The Field-Marshal, Colonel Hoffmann, and myself lived together in one of the villas. Here also was the staff mess. I spent many hours in this house and it is indelibly engraved on my memory.

The offices of the General Staff were in the barracks. The fifty-pfennig portraits of the Tsar, the Tsarina, and the Tsarevitch were typical of the Russian culture of that time. The rooms were large and suitable for our purpose and could be well heated for the coming winter.

Kovno is a typical Russian town, with low, mean, wooden houses and comparatively wide streets. From the hills which closely encircle the town there is an interesting view of the town and the confluence of the Niemen and the Vilia. On the farther bank of the Niemen there stands the tower of an old German castle of the Teutonic Knights, a symbol of German civilization in the East, and not far from it there is a memorial of French schemes for the conquest of the world—that hill upon which Napoleon stood in 1812 as he watched the great army crossing the river.

My mind was flooded with overwhelming historical memories; I determined to resume in the occupied territory that work of civilization at which the Germans had labored in those lands for many centuries. The population, made up as it is of such a mixture of races, would never accomplish anything of its own accord, and, left to itself, would succumb to Polish domination.

I was proud to think that, over a hundred years ago, after a period of great weakness and tribulation in Germany, we had thrown off the foreign yoke. Now that same Germany, first beaten by Napoleon because she was decadent and subsequently united by the efforts of a few great men, stood victorious in this World War against enemies who far outnumbered her and added fresh glories to her record. I had faith in final victory. Nothing else was possible. The German people had been through too much already to expose themselves again to such a terrible fate. The men who were leading Germany only needed to develop her latent powers to add fuel to the holy fire burning—as I then thought—in every German heart.

A happy future of assured prosperity seemed to be opening out for the Fatherland.

Our work, of course, was not interrupted for a single day by the migration from Lötzen to Kovno. The necessary telephone connections were quickly made in the office, and the bare necessities in the way of furniture were improved upon. That this additional furniture was taken from other houses which had been deserted by the inhabitants could not be helped. It was done in as orderly a manner as possible, but a certain amount of confusion was inevitable. These are the regrettable conditions imposed by the exigencies of war. The belligerent or individual soldiers are not to be blamed for this. Circumstances are too strong for them. To the individual civilian who suffers

it is a matter of indifference *how* he loses his property. He understands nothing of the necessities of war, and therefore is ready enough to talk about the enemy's barbaric methods of warfare.

We found plenty of furniture at Kovno, but later, when we got to Brest-Litovsk, we were confronted by empty barracks. We therefore had furniture sent on to us from Kovno and requisitioned some from other places as well. War is a rough trade and there was no help for it.

In this town I usually attended the evangelical services which Pastor Wessel held in the former Orthodox church, a magnificent building, typical of the Russian despotic rule in that country. There I heard for the first time on foreign soil the beautiful old melody sung as a hymn:

I have given myself  
With heart and with hand,  
To thee, land of love and life,  
My German Fatherland.<sup>1</sup>

I was deeply moved. This hymn ought to be sung every Sunday in all the churches, and should be engraved on the hearts of all Germans.

### III

The work before us was to consolidate our front and endeavor to improve the condition of the armies. On our right wing Prince Leopold of Bavaria's army group was occupying the sector south of the Niemen as far as south of Pinsk. This army group and High Command in the East itself were under the General Headquarters. To the south these troops linked up

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<sup>1</sup> Ich hab' mich ergeben  
Mit Herz und mit Hand,  
Dir Land voll Lieb' und Leben,  
Mein deutsches Vaterland.

with the front line of the Austrian Army (with its General Headquarters at Teschen), which had Linsingen's army group on its left wing and its right close to the Rumanian frontier.

In the Eastern theater the line of the Twelfth and Eighth Armies had been so shortened that there was room for only one of them. The Twelfth remained where it was; it extended from the Niemen to beyond the Lida-Molodetchno Railway. General von Gallwitz had given up the command and taken over the command of an army against Serbia. His place with the Twelfth Army had been taken by General von Fabeck, who had come from the Western front.

The Tenth Army extended to the north as far as the Disna. Farther north again, the Scholtz army group had been formed under the general of that name, who had commanded the Eighth Army. The left wing of the Tenth Army was on the banks of the Dvina, about half-way between Dvinsk and Jakobstadt.

The northern part of the front and the coast defenses were under General von Below. The Niemen Army, no longer entitled to that name, became the Eighth Army. Such a change of name is not so simple as it looks on paper. A variety of measures have to be taken to avoid present and future possibility of confusion.

The Navy had taken up quarters in the naval port of Libau. The sphere of its command there had to be specially determined.

Certain subordinate formations had to be fitted into this scheme for holding the front. A number of rearrangements on a large scale were necessary. Where the main offensives had taken place there was a congestion of troops. At other points the line was too thin. A proper balance had to be struck. Cavalry divisions had to be relieved by infantry divisions. It was a

long time before these movements were completed and the troops arrived at positions where they could be left for the time being. But there could not be any question as yet of real rest. The line had to be consolidated, and meanwhile other troops had to hold long stretches of front. Both these tasks taxed the strength of the men. The positions to be strengthened were generally those where the fighting had been fiercest. Points which it was impossible to hold were to be abandoned, but both commanders and troops resigned themselves to this course with great reluctance.

Between Vishniev and the Disna, the line to which the left wing of the Tenth Army had withdrawn, it was easier to select positions.

The construction of trenches and billets, and indeed conditions at the front as a whole, suffered from the bad railway connections. The Russians had everywhere completely destroyed the railways. The bridges over the Niemen and other large rivers had all been blown up, the railway stations burned, the water supply destroyed, and the telegraph wires broken down. The railways had been torn up in places, and the sleepers and rails removed. The military railway authorities, with their labor and engineer companies, and the telegraphists for the extremely important work of re-establishing the telegraph, had a colossal work before them. The Director of Railways in the East knew his job.

The completion of the railway bridge near Kovno was of the greatest importance. It was possible to use it by the end of September, and for a long time it was the only channel for supplies to the Tenth and Twelfth Armies and the right wing of Scholtz's army group. At that time I was satisfied if I could count on two trains a day to Lida for the Twelfth Army, but, as it turned out, it was not so simple to obtain the trains

themselves, which were required by the army. Communication with our own railways was very bad. On one occasion the Twelfth Army had urgently requested a train-load of fodder and received a train-load of seltzer-water! That is a trifle during a great war, but the well-being of man and horse is dependent on a series of trifles, and so the latter assume a great and disproportionate importance.

The northern network of railways joined the Memel line at Prekuln. The Russian railways in Lithuania and Courland had a surprisingly small capacity, even in peace-time. This would not have been the case if Russia had really needed the ports of Windau and Libau for her domestic and commercial existence. The Prekuln-Memel line, moreover, was behind the times. It was a long time before any sort of regular service of three or four trains could be established on the line from Ponieviesh to Dvinsk.

On the long stretches from Vilna to Smorgon and Vilna to Dvina conditions were not so difficult, but even here the provisional water-tanks froze in winter and there were all sorts of obstacles, surmountable and insurmountable.

The branch line Ponieviesh-Uzjany-Sventziany had hardly been damaged, but it was quite inadequate.

It was long after Christmas before traffic was made safe and comparatively regular on all the lines, so that at last the longed-for leave trains could be put on.

And then a peculiarly critical situation arose. After a spell of intense cold the ice on the Niemen and Windau began to break up. The masses of ice swept away the bridge across the Windau at Moscheiki. The sole means of communication with Germany by rail was thus cut off. The floating ice dashed against the railway bridge at Kovno and displaced the rails, but the bridge stood firm. Once more we passed through

a period of great anxiety, although for a different reason. If this bridge had also been destroyed the armies would have been in a critical position.

By degrees the other bridges across the Niemen were completed. The extension of the railways progressed, traffic became regular, and conditions on the Eastern front were regulated more satisfactorily. The new lines, the Tauroggen-Radzivilishki and Shavli-Mitau sections, were completed in May and August 1916, the line from Sventziany toward Lake Narotch not until later.

The two former railways have opened up the country and facilitated the work of civilization. To this extent these districts are in our debt.

Behind the front there arose a system of light railways, connecting up with this network of lines, for the direct supply of the troops.

The roads in the districts occupied by the troops continued to be of great importance. The great main roads from Grodno to Lida, Kovno to Dvinsk, and Tauroggen to Mitau were put into excellent repair. The other roads were repaired as far as possible. At the season when the snow was melting they were transformed in places into a slough in which horses were drowned if they happened to fall.

As the work on the railways and roads progressed the consolidation of the front also went forward. The troops cut wood for themselves, and some of the barbed wire was manufactured on the spot. The proximity of war underground made the construction of the trenches peculiarly difficult. The geologists rendered good service to the troops in this connection.

Behind the front arose workshops for the repair of all kinds of war material. The numerous captured Russian machine guns were altered to suit German ammunition in a specially erected factory.

Of course I did not deal with these matters in detail, and confined myself to stimulating and organizing activities.

I was particularly concerned about the welfare of the men and the horses.

The quarters were, in themselves, not so bad. The war had passed comparatively rapidly over the region which we finally occupied, and therefore had not been very destructive. Nor had the Russians burned down everything, as they did farther south in Poland. All the same, there remained a great deal of work to be done in the constructions of billets for the troops, especially close behind the line. The dugouts, which took a long time to build, were made as habitable as possible by the troops. But only those who have been through it can know with how little officers and men had to be satisfied and were satisfied.

Huts for men and horses had to be built farther behind the line. The troops became great experts at this work. Their artistic sense was displayed in decorative embellishments of birchwood.

Generally speaking, the provisioning of the troops proceeded pretty regularly. Rations were sometimes short with some of the troops, especially potatoes. There was not enough fodder for the horses. There was no oats, and green fodder was too scarce to be supplied in sufficient quantities. Many horses died of debility. In the end we had to add sawdust to their food.

It needed special care to prevent the supplies which had been brought up at such pains from going bad at the railway stations. Of course there were no sheds or tents there. I had to see to this also. Good-will was universal, but the difficulties accumulated until they took the heart out of even the lowest ranks. In dealing with the Christmas parcels there were similar difficulties to be overcome.



The health of men and horses had my special attention. I went into both these subjects in detail with the officers responsible for them, Surgeon-General von Kern and Chief Veterinary-Surgeon Grammlich.

It had been difficult to look after the wounded during the advance, but conditions had now become somewhat easier. There still remained, however, a great deal to be done by the responsible authorities. The few hospitals which we found in the occupied territory were hardly worth considering. I urged that as many wounded as possible should be sent home, but I had to be very patient. Later on cases of slight illness or wounds were not sent home, but retained in the occupied territory, where, during convalescence, they were given light duty. We were spared the epidemics to which armies are liable; only spotted fever occurred from time to time for a short period. As regards measures against vermin, very thorough precautions had been taken at the frontier to prevent the troops from going home infected. Thanks to the energy of Surgeon-General von Kern and the conscientiousness of the army doctors, the whole medical service was in perfect order. Herr von Kern is a philosopher, and this would appear to show that philosophers can also be men of action.

The horses suffered from glanders and mange. We mastered the glanders by means of blood-tests, but not the mange, and this did extensive mischief. Many remedies were tried, but an effective one was not discovered until the war was almost at an end. Veterinary hospitals were erected in large numbers, and the officers of this service had plenty to do. Their devotion was rewarded by great successes.

The supplies and accommodation for the horses were not always all they should have been. I often represented to the Army Headquarters Staff that it should devote more care and attention to the horses.

The replacement of clothing, the provision of winter clothing and woollen wear, and the delivery of pit-props for the trenches were beset with many difficulties; I had to bring all my energies to bear.

Leave was begun as soon as possible. It was granted more and more freely as the situation on the railways improved.

I went into the question of the speedy delivery of letters and newspapers. I was most anxious that the men should be as closely in touch with home as possible, and I was able to help in that direction. At the beginning of the war the military postal authorities were faced with an insoluble problem. They had not sufficient motor-lorries. But under the Military Postmaster Domizlaff they soon got to work and were able to meet the heavy demands on their resources.

Behind the front and in the large towns soldiers' and officers' clubs were established. There could not be too many of these, so far as I was concerned. The soldiers' clubs in the East met a deeply felt need; this was shown by the numbers who frequented them. The people at home gave me real assistance, and the women who came out to the soldiers' clubs did good work.

I was particularly gratified when, through the agency of Pastor Hoppe, friends of the Field-Marshal and myself offered to equip certain field libraries for the use of the troops. Looking after the intellectual needs of the troops was a labor of love to us, and we eagerly accepted this offer. Pastor Hoppe took the matter in hand and carried it through energetically. On my birthday in 1917 he handed me a considerable sum for the same purpose with these heartfelt words, "The spirit creates weapons and brings victory."<sup>1</sup> I hope these field libraries were useful to the troops. They could not, of course, entirely satisfy their demands for

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<sup>1</sup> "Der Geist schafft Waffen and Sieg."

books: military bookshops were set up in great numbers. These were handed over to the management of Messrs. Stilke, who were to co-operate with other firms. They served the troops well. The military bookshops also stocked newspapers of every political complexion.

The armies produced their own local newspapers. I arranged for them to have a good news service.

The getting up of concerts, theaters, and moving-picture shows were in the hands of the army authorities, and we encouraged these undertakings.

In view of the enormous demands that the High Command in the East had been obliged to make on the troops it was a real pleasure to do everything I could for them, and my colleagues helped me most effectively in this work.

The military efficiency of the troops was not neglected. Training was promoted as far as possible, although schools could not be established on the same scale as they were in the West.

The Niemen fortresses, Grodno and Kovno, as also Libau, were strengthened, and the former frontier lines maintained in a state of readiness. They formed reserve positions. The labor available did not allow of any further measures. My ordinary duties in looking after the various armies were very considerably increased by the demands made by the military and home authorities in the occupied territories—not to speak of my duty to take care of the local population. I cheerfully undertook all these new duties and firmly resolved to make a good job of them.

#### IV

The country was in a devastated condition owing to the war, and only where we had been in occupation for some time was there any approach to order. Some of

the inhabitants had deliberately left in the van of the retreating Russians; others had been taken with them. Numbers of these had hidden themselves in the depths of the forests and now returned home. Many properties, however, remained unoccupied. The harvest had not been reaped and it was impossible to imagine how cultivation was to be continued. There was no control. The Russian government officials, judges, administrative authorities, and nearly all secret-intelligence agents had left the country. There were neither *gendarmes* nor police, and the priests alone possessed a remnant of authority. This denuded country had to live somehow. At the very outset of our occupation of Vilna, Kovno, and Grodno serious difficulties arose in connection with the feeding of the population, and these difficulties threatened to increase and spread to other towns. There was also a shortage of wood for fuel.

The population, apart from the German portion, held aloof from us. The German districts, especially the Balts, had welcomed our troops. The Letts were opportunists, and awaited events. The Lithuanians believed the hour of deliverance was at hand, and when the good times they anticipated did not materialize, owing to the cruel exigencies of war, they became suspicious once more, and turned against us. The Poles were hostile, as they feared, quite justifiably, a pro-Lithuanian policy on our part. The White Ruthenians were of no account, as the Poles had robbed them of their nationality and given nothing in return. In the autumn of 1915 I thought I would like to obtain some idea of the distribution of this race. At first they were, literally, not to be found. Subsequently we discovered they were a widely scattered people, apparently of Polish origin, but with such a low standard of civilization that much time would be required before we could

do anything for them. The Jew did not know what attitude to adopt, but he gave us no trouble, and we were at least able to converse with him, which was hardly ever possible with the Poles, Lithuanians, and Letts. The language difficulties weighed heavily against us and cannot be overestimated. Owing to the dearth of German works of reference on the subject, we knew very little about the country or the people, and found ourselves in a strange world.

In a region as large as East and West Prussia, Pomerania, and Posen together we were faced with an appalling task. We had to construct and organize everything afresh. The first thing to be done was to secure peace and order behind the army and put an end to espionage. The land must be made self-supporting, and further supply the army and our people at home. It had also to contribute to the equipment of troops and our requirements in war material. Our economic conditions, due to the enemy blockade, made this course an imperative duty.

Agriculture had to be taken in hand as soon as possible. The time for the solution of political problems was not yet at hand. These matters were handed over to the inspectors of the lines of communication, who were primarily concerned with the administration of occupied territories.

These officers were given the duty of maintaining order in the country. The lines-of-communication troops were at their disposal for this purpose, and in the work of counter-espionage the field police rendered assistance.

The inspectors of the lines of communication were given special organizations for the administration of the district. These were under a chief administrator, who was given special duties and was responsible to his particular inspector of communications.

The commandants on the lines of communication and the administrative bodies were subordinate to the authority of the inspectors. Causes of friction, of course, there were, and therefore, among Germans, friction was bound to arise. However, thanks to our excellent inspectors, all these difficulties were eventually overcome. Generals von Harbou, Madlung, and Freiherr von Seckendorff proved themselves efficient district administrators.

In the area under the control of the Commander-in-chief in the East administrative and economic questions were studied and dealt with by a special department. There was no scope for a General Government, quite apart from the fact that it would have been a useless piece of machinery. The armies required their own lines of communication area. The Quarter-master-General was busy in the West, and unable to give sufficient attention to affairs in the East. The latter had to take matters into his own hands. The inspectors were responsible for the execution of any order issued by him, apart from their own particular duties.

Owing to the absence of any native administrative or legal machinery, our administration had a character of its own, which enabled it to withstand the storms of the revolution in November 1918.

## V

I can give only a brief description of the administration of the High Command in the East, but I do it gladly, for I owe as many thanks to my assistants in this field of labor as I do to those who helped me on the military side. What we accomplished together until my departure in 1916 was admirable in every respect and worthy of the German character. It bene-

fited the army and Germany as well as the local inhabitants and the country.

I required many colleagues in this responsible undertaking. They were not all appointed at once, but only as occasion and necessity demanded. By the side of my military staff there gradually arose an extensive administrative staff under General von Eisenhart-Rothe, a man of wide experience in economic problems. He served the cause and myself with infectious and self-sacrificing energy. As Intendant-General he was of the utmost assistance to me later on.

At the end of October the first thing to be done was to introduce our administration into the newly occupied portions of the lines-of-communication area, as had already been done in the western portions. A belt of territory along the front remained the operations zone, under the direct control of the army commands. The various lines-of-communication areas had adopted different methods, but centralization was imperative, as otherwise it would be very difficult to supervise the administrative machinery. This had to be done with tact and caution, or we should do more harm than good.

The magnitude of the task, and the wide region to be administered, a large personnel was necessary, in spite of all efforts to be as economical as possible. Although I hold the view that it is not numbers that matter, but individual quality, this principle is necessarily subject to limitations. I could not carry on the work without a certain staff, and no organization could have done with less than mine. Everybody did his best. I could not have dispensed with one of them.

I was careful that the military character of our administration in the area under the control of the inspectors of lines of communication should be maintained, and, above all, that those should be se-

lected who were no longer fit for service at the front. But I also used civilians. My chief preoccupation was to obtain men with technical training, for I am not one of those who believe that the majority of men are capable of holding any post. I have often observed how a little technical knowledge helps to make the work easier for everybody. For purely administrative posts I was compelled to take men without previous experience. A resolute will, general experience, and sound common sense had to make up for what was lacking. For agriculture, forestry, law, finance, ecclesiastical, and educational affairs, experts were absolutely necessary. The extraordinary demands on the man-power of the nation, for military duties, made it at first difficult to obtain the necessary men. Later on, when the administration of the Commander-in-chief in the East attained a certain reputation, it was an easier matter. We used to make searching inquiries about all candidates at the employment bureaus at home. The subordinate posts were filled by the various administrations, and lines-of-communication inspectorates in the same way. I insisted upon having reliable men on this foreign soil. Natives were employed only in Courland, and then sparingly.

Everybody co-operated zealously with me in this strenuous undertaking. We were controlling a country the conditions of which were absolutely unknown to us, which had been devastated by war, and in which all political and economic bonds had been severed. We were among a foreign population, consisting of many different rival races, a population that did not speak our tongue and was secretly hostile. All of us were animated by the spirit of faithful devotion to duty, the heritage of many centuries of Prussian discipline and tradition.

As I became better acquainted with the country I



realized that some measures could not be carried through, but would have to be modified. Here and there, of course, things might have been gone better and more might have been achieved. But my duty was to act promptly and decisively in these unfamiliar conditions. In particular, any omission in matters economical was more serious than a mistake which could be rectified later. Only after we had got to work on the problem was I able to see my way clearly. I should have been more cautious had I been dealing with a political problem, but I was not concerned with that yet.

## VI

The territory administered by the Commander-in-chief in the East stretched southward to parts of the lines-of-communication area of the army group under Field-Marshal Prince Leopold. These had formerly been the areas through which the Twelfth Army advanced and subsequently had its lines of communication. The forest of Bialowieser thus came under the administration of the Commander-in-chief in the East. Its ramifications linked with the whole lines-of-communication system, and the two developed side by side. Up to the end of 1915 and 1916 the following administrative districts had been created: Courland, Lithuania, Suwalki, Vilna, Grodno, and Bialystok. The boundaries were afterward altered. At first Vilna and Suwalki were jointly administered from Vilna. At my desire, on my departure in July 1916, the districts of Vilna and Lithuania were combined under the administration of Lithuania. In the first instance Grodno was joined to Bialystok. In the autumn of 1917 all these districts were incorporated in Lithuania.

The chief administrators of Courland and Lithuania have attracted much public attention.

Major von Gossler governed Courland in an unobtrusive and impartial manner. He was a member of the Reichstag, a landowner, and an *ex-Landrat*. Since 1905 the Balts had been very bitter against the Letts. He understood not only how to make the former more conciliatory, but also how to win the sympathy of the latter and gain their active co-operation. In Courland they still speak with gratitude and appreciation of his just and far-seeing administration.

Lieutenant-Colonel Prince von Isenburg, in Lithuania, was more impulsive, perhaps too much so. He was an energetic man who managed his family estates admirably. My attention was first drawn to him in occupied Poland, where he had taken a useful part in the administration. The Lieutenant-Colonel later fell a victim to politics.

So long as I remained in Kovno politics played no part in the administration. Prince von Isenburg had full opportunity for interesting himself in the affairs of the other districts and enlisting the sympathies of the population and clergy of the small district then under his control.

I am sorry I cannot give the names of various other deserving administrators. The personality of the Lines of Communication Inspector, Gen. Freiherr von Seckendorff, made itself felt, particularly in the Bialystok district. He gave his administration a character of its own. Nowhere else did the lines-of-communication commandants and the heads of districts work so well together and with so little friction from the start.

The chief administrators and lines-of-communication inspectors were in all respects responsible to the Commander-in-chief in the East for the administration of the country. They had a body of officials under them corresponding to the economic section of my staff.

The administrative districts were divided into circles,

often as large as a line-of-communication area in the West. The onus of the administrative work, as regards its economic and agricultural aspects, lay on the president and head of the circle. He had nothing to do with the law, which had equal authority with his own. The heads of the circles ranked with town majors of the larger towns.

Subordinated to the district commandants were the mayors of the small towns and the area presidents in the country, and under the latter were the village presidents. Attached to the district commandants were specialist agricultural officers, whose duty was to supervise cultivation and estate management, and to take steps for increasing production and utilizing the harvest. Other officials assisted the commandants in producing all kinds of raw material required for war purposes.

The uniform system of administration outlined above was only gradually introduced in accordance with an administrative decree of June 7, 1916.

These districts had a body of *gendarmes* for their police force. In the provinces they were formed into detachments, and in the district under the Commander-in-chief in the East they were formed into a corps. I deeply regretted the lack of German police forces. Germany could not spare sufficient *gendarmes*, and I was therefore compelled to commandeer older men from the front. They received special instructions to fit them in some measure for their duties. Col. Rochus Schmidt, a particularly careful officer, and I would gladly have found some better arrangement, but the whole thing was a makeshift. Unfortunately individual *gendarmes* may have added to the discontent which showed itself later. How could they be expected to give satisfaction and accomplish anything in a strange land and among a hostile population, and with



**FIG. 6. JURISDICTION OF THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF IN THE EAST**

insufficient knowledge of the language? This one question will illustrate the difficulties which Germans in a foreign land had to encounter. Dishonesty and profiteering are absolutely inexcusable. The loyalty of the *gendarmes* brought them into conflict with the numerous armed bands, and many of them lost their lives. This must never be forgotten.

The government of the country included the administration of justice, which was so arranged as to fit in with the district organization. In each district there was a district court for the local population; we had to create them, as there were none. The provincial courts were set up as a kind of higher court, perhaps unnecessarily.

The High Court in Kovno, under President Kratzenberg, was the final court of appeal. As chief of the Department of Justice he had to take considerable part in its administrative business.

The functions of the lines-of-communication tribunals were in no way restricted by these district courts. The courts worked well, both together and independently.

The forestry service in the various provinces was outside the district organization. Inspectorates were created according to the forest areas, of which that at Bialovics became the best known.

## VII

Vitality had to be infused into this administrative system, if it was to accomplish useful work. It could not become bureaucratic, but must adapt itself to the needs of the situation. "Precedent," that gravedigger of independent judgment, could not apply here, thank God!

I had the services of Captains von Brockhusen and Freiherr von Gayl, of the Reserve, in the whole business

of building up the administrative machine. Prior to the war the former had been a *Landrat*, and the latter director of the East Prussian Land Company at Königsberg. We produced a sound organization, well fitted to cope with the heavy demands made upon it.

We gave special attention to the health of the population. We triumphed over spotted fever, which was rampant in many places. It involved heavy sacrifices in doctors.

To pacify the population and give material relief to the country we made a beginning with the redemption of requisition notes issued by the troops during operations. It was a difficult and complicated matter to carry through. From now on we paid for everything in cash. I wanted in that way to help the country and increase its productivity—in my view a very important matter.

It was necessary for us to obtain control of the products of the soil, and to insure the proper management of agriculture and full utilization of the soil. This was all the more difficult because the population was so small. For example, the district of Bauske numbered only four inhabitants to the square kilometer.

In our anxiety to help the home country, and indeed under pressure, we attempted too much in the way of cultivation. We interested German companies in the business in the hope of their being able, with the means at their disposal, to improve the cultivation of the thinly populated regions.

We took big estates under our own management. Motor-plows and agricultural machinery of all kinds were supplied. Seed was distributed. Army horses helped in the plowing. The main thing, however, was to stimulate the interest of the local population by paying ready money and fixing fair prices.

The prices we allowed were lower than those adopted

by the General Government of Warsaw, but they were quite adequate. We took into consideration the already enormous expenditure of the Treasury. Prince Max's Government raised the prices immediately—I do not know why; at any rate, he got no thanks for it.

The soil was, generally speaking, unproductive, and disappointed our hopes. It is not drained, and cultivation can be attempted only late in the season. The varieties of seed were not selected with sufficient care. Artificial manure was unknown. The yield of hay and clover, rape-seed and flax, was alone satisfactory.

The transport of stores to the railway and other collecting stations was a particularly arduous business. The roads were bad, and it took days to get the produce of the land to these places in small carts drawn by one or two horses. We paid premiums, but the peculiar difficulties of this theater of war could only be reduced, not eliminated. A good deal was never delivered at all.

Arrangements were immediately made for the installation of a potato-drying plant, and we took steps to organize the production of fodder from wood and straw.

It was doubly necessary to exploit to the full the resources of the occupied territory, as the demands on the home cattle stocks were so great. Cattle had, of course, suffered severely, owing to the war. A census had to be taken. It was a difficult business. Many were hidden in the cellars or driven into the forests, but we were gradually successful in our stock-taking, although there was no register. But by degrees we got a regular trade going.

We paid much attention to the cultivation of vegetables and fruit. Jam and marmalade factories were established. Mushrooms in large quantities were collected and dried.

The fishing rights of the numerous large lakes were leased. At Libau deep-sea fishing was organized.

Everything that could be used for food was developed to the fullest extent.

The condition of the town population was desperate, and in the winter of 1915-16 we were compelled to draw on our military stores for the alleviation of distress. Later, the conditions improved considerably. The army received its share, and I also helped the home country. I remember that when in June or July 1916 Herr von Batocki asked me to assist Berlin, I was in a position to do so.

In order to help the country we permitted the activities of the existing foreign maintenance committees of the various nationalities inhabiting the occupied territory, on condition that their support should not be confined to inhabitants of their own nationality, but that they should also consider others. The Jewish committee, which had the largest means at its disposal (derived from America), showed itself broad-minded, and did useful work. Its activities testified to the extraordinary unity of this people and won recognition. The first Jewish national kitchen established in Kovno bore my name. The army Rabbi Rosenack made the suggestion to me.

Men of proved ability gave me their assistance in all agricultural and food problems. Among these names the most prominent are those of the well-known member of the Prussian Upper Chamber, Major Count Yorck of Wartenburg, *Geh. Reg. Rat* Captain von Rümker, and later *Hofkammerrat* Major Heckel.

The conscription of horses naturally lay in the hands of the military. In this matter the district commandants performed the same duties as the Prussian *Landrat*. The occupied territory had to supply a large number, if we wished to avoid making yet heavier demands on the home country. The Lithuanian horse is small and strong; it possesses great powers of en-



durance, and its wants are few. It is, therefore, a very useful animal for military purposes.

The country was bound to suffer severely as the result of the continuous heavy demands made upon it and the constant levies of horses and cattle. The local administrative authorities often drew my attention to this fact, but there was nothing for it but to insist on these deliveries. The area governed by us was no more severely taxed than any other. The home country also suffered from the measures we were forced to adopt.

A great deal of the discontent that was apparent later was traceable to these inevitable military requisitions. Severities that occurred from time to time may have increased this ill feeling; they certainly did harm. The political democratic agitators made it their business to add fuel to the flames.

It would have been an absurdity to spare the area administered by the Commander-in-chief in the East from humanitarian reasons at the cost of our own country.

Owing to the intensive cultivation in Germany, any action prejudicial to the agricultural industry must be far more harmful than decreased productivity in the area of the Commander-in-chief in the East.

The provision of raw material was an important undertaking, for which we also paid cash. The Jew was, in this instance, indispensable as middleman. We supplied the home War Department with skins and hides, copper and brass, rags and scrap iron, and further relieved it by taking over and managing the factories in Libau, Kovno, and Bialystok. A very extensive trade department was gradually established, under the control of *Geheimrat* Major Eilsberger, a man of foresight and energy, who later became Ministerial Director in the Imperial Treasury.

Great importance was attached to the manufacture of

barbed wire. This and the management of other factories was efficiently undertaken by Captain Markau, who in peace had been with the General Electric Company, and during the war with the Chief of the Field Telegraphs on the Eastern front. So everything was put to the fullest possible use.

Among other things a large railway workshop was established at Libau by the military railway directorate.

With the provision of raw materials there was a slight improvement in trade, which was necessarily hampered by the restrictions on personal intercourse, which for military reasons we were compelled to impose on the country.

The rich forests particularly invited exploitation, but indiscriminate felling was prohibited. The consumption of wood for field works and railway sleepers was enormous. Sawmills arose one after the other, and as we gradually provided for all the needs of our army, we were also able to deliver wood to the West and to Serbia. Suitable timber was sent to Germany, and also given to the inhabitants for the rebuilding of their homes.

At Alt-Autz, in Courland, the chief of the Aviation Services erected a workshop for sheds and barracks.

Sleepers were constructed in considerable numbers.

It was extremely difficult to have the stocks of wood necessary for heating purposes always in readiness, especially in the winter of 1915-16, as we lacked all idea of the quantities required.

Cellulose wood for the manufacture of powder and paper was sent to Germany in considerable quantities. We soon allowed unrestricted trade in this particular kind of wood, as we and Germany profited by it. I was glad to be able to help the supply of paper to the German newspapers.

Raft transport on the Niemen and other navigable rivers was undertaken and magnificently organized by *Forstrat* Schütte.

We turned our attention to the production of resin, and, acting under the advice of *Oberförster* Kienitz, introduced this industry into those districts. It is a tedious but nevertheless profitable process. It was intended to demonstrate it in Germany at a later date. A factory for preparing the resin was established at Kovno. From the wood we also extracted various chemicals, and from the residue made charcoal. *Forstrat* Kirchner and many other officials have left a monument of their energy and foresight. The work done by *Forstrat* Major Escherich, both as an organizer of agriculture and administrative official in his district of the Bialovieser forest, has been the admiration of many German visitors.

The agricultural possibilities of the land were very thoroughly developed in every direction, but we spared the country and local population as much as we could. Consideration for the rate of exchange made it impossible always to pay in German money. In agreement with the Imperial Bank and the authorities in Berlin, the Army-Intendant *Geheimrat* Kessel and Captain Königs issued special local coinage of the Commander-in-chief in the East, which was soon gladly accepted. We also opened German banks in order to revitalize economic conditions.

It was no simple matter to finance the whole administration. *Geh. Ober-Finanzrat* Captain Tiesler, who distinguished himself by his peculiarly clear insight and creative gifts, undertook this duty with great skill.

#### FORESTRY

He had to draw up an exact budget for the entire administration and at the same time find sources of revenue.

As I have said before, the numbers employed were kept down as much as possible. There was an ab-

solite scramble among the various departments of my administration for places and extra pay for the subordinates.

The commandants on the lines of communication were always coming to me with fresh demands. I had to smooth things over, and so gained some idea of the trials and anxieties of our national financial administration.

As soon as we had successfully drawn up our first budget we forwarded it to the War Ministry in Berlin and to the Quartermaster-General. After careful scrutiny and violent disagreement it was at last approved.

Our revenue was derived from customs, monopolies, taxes, and national industries.

The technical details of the whole system of taxation had to be arranged on the simplest possible lines. It would have been impossible to introduce a more complicated and therefore more equitable system in the first place, because we lacked a trained staff. Besides, nothing had been left of the Russian system, and in any case the population was ignorant of these matters. The bulk of our revenue was derived from customs, indirect taxation, and monopolies, in view of the Russian practice.

Import duties were collected at the frontiers by Prussian financial officials, against an indemnity to the Prussian Treasury.

Private parcels intended for the army were, of course, duty free. Only the few consignments intended for the population were affected, and the revenue derived from this source was small.

We levied a small export duty only on cellulose wood. It did not bring in much.

The taxes yielded more. Captain Tiesler established a monopoly of the sale of cigarettes, the financial technicalities of which seem to me worthy of imita-

tion. Monopolies of spirits, salt, matches, and confectionery were introduced on the same lines.

We introduced a rough system of graded taxation per head. We could not have any better basis for a system of personal assessment.

As regards taxation on property, we introduced a tax on land and profits and inhabited house duty.

The people on the whole were satisfied with the taxation, which did not burden them heavily. The total taxes per head, including the local rates, did not exceed 19.50 marks<sup>1</sup> annually, as against 32.75 marks before the war. They could not, however, get used to the dog license. Owing to hydrophobia, dogs had become a danger to the country, and counter measures had to be taken. The tax, however, was abolished when its purpose in that respect had been accomplished.

At first the Government undertakings yielded very little profit. This was due partly to the heavy initial expenses and the high cost of liquidation, and partly to the economic isolation of Germany, which made it necessary to concentrate on increase of production rather than financial profit.

I have indicated only the principal items of taxation. Further sources of revenue were gradually developed. The results were favorable, for the receipts sufficed for the administration of the country without assistance from the Imperial Treasury. A system had been established which, though based on broad principles, had required the most careful elaboration in detail.

### VIII

The legal system was in accordance with the Hague Convention. This required in matters of private litiga-

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<sup>1</sup> Before the war a mark was equal to 24¼ cents, United States gold money.

tion that the local population should have the benefit of its own laws. Our first business, however, was to find out what the law really was. This was no easy matter, owing to the confusion in the Russian system, a confusion which had existed in this region even before the war.

When we found out what the law was it had to be translated into German to enable the German judges to give judgment accordingly. I firmly believe that only the Germans would take so much trouble in a conquered country. In spite of that, enemy propaganda announced us as Huns to the world at large so successfully that we were helpless against it.

President Kratzenberg did excellent work in his quiet, clear-headed way. The German judge administered foreign laws to the poor, vermin-infested villages of Lithuania in the same spirit of justice and impartiality that he would have shown in Berlin. Who can emulate this?

Major Altman, Inspector of Schools in the Prussian Ministry of Education, drew up a scheme for the guidance of schools, to the further benefit of the population. It was conceived in a lofty spirit, and respected the rights of each denomination and race. Here, as elsewhere, anything of a provocative nature was studiously excluded. There was a dearth of teachers for the schools, so we supplied numbers of the teaching profession from the Landsturm. Later on, the complaint was made that they spoke only German to the children, who, after all, attended voluntarily. The teachers unfortunately knew no other language, and we had very few Lithuanian or Polish-speaking teachers at our disposal.

We turned our attention to the question of school-books, for various Polish school-books had shown me what education can do to intensify national feeling.

Dantzic, Gnesen, Posen, and Vilna were Polish towns. This fact impressed me as deeply as the systematic manner in which France had educated her youth in the idea of *revanche* made a deep impression upon me. The Poles and the French have by these means kept alive a strong national feeling, which stands them in good stead now. We have not pursued such an educational policy, and suffered from the fact that the strong national idea has not been instilled into our youth. Such a feeling is necessary if a country is to survive crises such as we have lived through since 1914, and now more than ever. This view is rejected by all who think that the ideal of human brotherhood comes first. That is natural enough from their point of view. The logic of facts, however, is against them until all nations adopt the same point of view. We now stand in sore need of such a strong national feeling.

No reconstructions were imposed on any one in the practice of his religion. We went so far in our desire for toleration as to give the Jews wheaten flour for unleavened bread.

The Evangelical clergy in Courland were on our side, and we were soon on satisfactory terms with the Catholic priesthood of Lithuania. The Polish Catholics, however, were hostile to us. To a certain extent the attitude of the people toward us was reflected in that of the Church, but the Lithuanian clergy were on the whole better disposed to us than the democracy in Vilna, who soon lost all status through their muddle-headed ambitions.

The Polish clergy were the pillar of Polish national propaganda. They had preserved that character even under the Russian knout. They were at war with the Lithuanians and had already overthrown the White Ruthenians. That the Russians should have allowed such a state of affairs is incomprehensible. The White

Ruthenes had to conduct their religious service in Polish, not in their own tongue. And this with Russian approval. The assistance of the clergy was invoked to oppress the White Ruthenians, the same as their brothers in East Galicia.

The Poles soon put forward claims in educational matters, and were anxious to have their own university in Vilna, but I refused permission.

As long as I controlled the administration we maintained a neutral attitude toward the various races. The Poles regarded us as anti-Polish because we gave the Lithuanians equal rights with them. I knew we should make no friends by pursuing a neutral policy.

I had purposely held aloof from racial politics, as I knew it would be impossible to deal with this question until the Polish situation had been cleared up. As the Imperial Government did not commit itself to any definite policy, my reserve was justified. In view of the general condition of the country, any political intervention would have been mistimed.

#### LAW

I could, therefore, not make up my mind to ask the Imperial Chancellor to draw up any definite political program, and merely kept him informed as to my views.

Every race had its own newspaper, which was, of course, subject to censorship. As a German paper, the *Kovmoer Zeitung* took precedence. For the press and the censorship, Captain Berkkau acted as my adviser. He combined great energy and a detailed knowledge of press technicalities with an independent and mature political judgment, and so was of great use to me. He had previously worked with the publishing-house of Ulstein, while the editor of the *Kovmoer Zeitung*, Lieutenant Osman, had been on the staff of the *Deutsche*



*Tageszeitung*. With his strong national bias, he was just what I wanted.

I gave all newspapers clear instructions to discuss events in Germany in a spirit acceptable to the Imperial Government. I could not, of course, permit any political activity on the part of the people, who were also forbidden to hold meetings.

Despite the necessary limitation of intercourse among the population, I permitted a certain amount of correspondence. I established a local post, with the aid of the Imperial Post-Office. Imperial postage stamps were used, surcharged for the territory of the Commander-in-chief in the East.

Lastly, we allowed freer intercourse between the Lithuanians and Jews and their compatriots in the United States.

We observed with satisfaction that the country was gradually settling down and that life was once more falling into an orderly routine. The German love of order and knowledge of hygiene carried the day. The peasant earned more than he had done under the Russians. In the towns business was revived.

The population was governed with a calm and steady hand. I objected to the compulsory military salute introduced by one army. I believe that to-day the people will acknowledge that we acted with justice and consideration.

## IX

Industrial reconstruction in the occupied area was undertaken by the troops. In particular, many saw-mills were erected, there being not only a big demand for planks, but also wood shavings for the mattresses of officers and men, and bedding for the horses.

The monotony of trench warfare was greatly relieved for the men by their industrial employment. I sym-

pathized with this feeling, and was glad to find a fresh field in which to serve the Fatherland. A very stimulating piece of work had fallen to me, and it absorbed my whole attention. I came to know splendid men and had to interest myself in many activities quite new to me. It was a great satisfaction to me to know that the authorities placed full confidence in me. My will permeated every branch of the administrative services, and kept alive their zeal for work. We felt that we were working for Germany's future, even in a strange land. We especially hoped to open a field for German colonization in Courland. I prohibited the sale of land in order to lay the foundation of a sound land and colonial policy, and also to prevent its exploitation. At that time I had in mind plans similar to those which the navy had carried out with great success at Kiao-chau.

What the Commander-in-chief in the East accomplished in the short time before the beginning of August 1916, when I left, was a work for civilization.

The beautiful gift later presented to me in Pless by the administrative officials will always remind me of the time when it was granted me, in the midst of war, to do constructive work.

This work was not wasted, for it certainly helped the home country, the army, and the land itself during the war, but whether seeds have remained in the soil which may later spring up and bear fruit is a question dependent on our hard fate and one that only the future can answer.

## X

### THE CAMPAIGN AND CRISIS IN THE EAST

While the Commander-in-chief in the East was quietly working for the welfare of the army and the occupied territory, the war continued on its course.

In November and December 1915 our successes against Serbia and Montenegro had brought on the fourth Isonzo battle; and about Christmas the Russian offensive on the southern portion of the Austro-Hungarian front. This attack lasted into January of 1916. Both concluded in a successful resistance on the part of our allies.

The two general staffs had now to make their plans for the campaign of 1916. Both were to attempt an offensive to bring about a decision. The German command was to attack at Verdun, while the Austro-Hungarian command was to invade Italy from the Tyrol.

This necessitated the transfer of troops and material to the Eastern front, to meet the Russian offensive, which could be reckoned on as a certainty.

From a strategical point of view Verdun as the point of attack was well chosen. This fortress had always served as a particularly dangerous sally-port, which very seriously threatened our rear communications, as the autumn of 1918 disastrously proved. Had we only been able to reach the defenses on the right bank of the Meuse, we should have achieved complete success. Our strategic position on the Western front, as well as the tactical situation of our troops in the St.-Mihiel salient, would have been materially improved. The attack began on February 21 and had a great success, especially during the early days, owing to the sterling qualities of our men. The advantage, however, was insufficiently exploited, and our advance soon came to a standstill. At the beginning of March the world was still under the impression that the Germans had won a victory at Verdun.

The Tyrol offensive against Italy by the Austrian troops was to begin only at the end of April or early in May. Owing to the bad railway communications, preparation had to be made very early.

To make the offensive against Verdun possible, heavy artillery had to be transferred from the German Eastern front to the West. The High Command had withdrawn more divisions from Serbia, and in order to reinforce the Italian front the Eastern front had been greatly weakened by the Austrian General Staff. Both offensives suffered from the fact that inadequate reserves prevented the first successes from being followed up. At Verdun, perhaps, as the offensive was limited, from a tactical point of view, we might have obtained a moderately favorable conclusion at not too high a cost.

But in Italy it was a question of an operation on the grand scale, which in its nature demanded for success much more man-power than we had at our disposal. Yielding to this demand led to a very serious weakening of the Eastern front, where the position was already critical on account of the great numerical superiority of the Russians, even if a decisive victory were won in Italy. In any case, we were under the impression that the successful repulse of the Russian winter offensive had made Austria-Hungary safe.

I am unable to say whether the two general staffs could have embarked on different operations altogether, or have undertaken a joint offensive against Italy. In any case, the result of the war was not to be decided on the Italian front. It could be fought out only in the West, in France. And we should be strong enough for a decision on that front only when the Russians had been defeated.

My thoughts turned to Rumania. She was the feather in the scales. We had to know what her attitude was. Had Rumania, even under pressure, joined forces with us, the Russian Army would have been outflanked. This offered great possibilities. If, under pressure from us, Rumania turned to the Entente, we

should, at any rate, have known how matters stood. We could act without delay with the troops on the spot at the time.

The Quadruple Alliance was on the defensive in the Balkans and Asia Minor. Only south of Bagdad Field-Marshal von der Goltz was preparing to attack the English at Kut-el-Amara.

As a result of the evacuation of Gallipoli by the Entente, the position of Turkey was considerably improved.

I do not know what the Entente had in view for 1916 before the French Army was compelled to concentrate on Verdun. It appeared, and indeed it was only to be expected, that the French were contemplating great offensives on all fronts.

The Russian advance into Armenia, which in the spring of 1916 led to the capture of Trebizond and Erzerum, was of no strategic value, and the Russians had no need to make any special effort. They held a more favorable position and had great numerical superiority over the Turks.

The English operations in Persia, Mesopotamia, and the Peninsula of Sinai were, on the same principle, not directed to the destruction of the Turkish Army, but aimed at territorial acquisitions for the British World Empire.

## XI

The German offensive at Verdun in March led to the fifth Isonzo battle. This Italian attack, therefore, took place long before the contemplated Austro-Hungarian offensive. It was once more unsuccessful.

The Russian Army also came on the scene. The Russian movement in the second half of March against our Eastern front was much more than an attempt of a relief offensive. It was to be a decisive battle and

had been undertaken in this spirit. Captured army orders were found, speaking of driving the enemy back beyond the frontiers of the Empire.

Since the beginning of March rumors had been current of a proposed offensive against Vilna. A concentration of troops had been observed east of Smorgon. The Smorgon-Vilna region seemed to be indicated. Reports of a coming offensive also reached us from Dvinsk and Jakobstadt. Counter measures were taken. We gathered that it was not exactly imminent, and I decided to go for two days to Berlin on family matters, and attend the wedding of Captain Prince Joachim of Prussia, who had been a valuable member of our staff since autumn 1914. I was in Berlin on March 11 and 12, when I received news which seemed to indicate that the attack was to begin shortly. So I was relieved to find myself back at Kovno.

The Russian bombardment began on the 16th, not in the Smorgon region, however, as I expected, but on the narrow front between Lakes Narotch and Vishniev, on both sides of the Sventziany-Postavy Railway, and southwest of Dvinsk. The artillery duel was of unprecedented intensity for the Eastern front. It was resumed on the 17th. On the 18th the infantry attacks began, and continued with intervals until the end of March.

The Russian aim was to cut off our north wing in the direction of Kovno and compel it to retreat by attacks at other points. In the second stage, it was to be thrown back against the coast north of the Niemen. This plan was conceived on a grand scale.

The first move in this enveloping process was to break our front in the direction of Sventziany by the two attacks from the Vishniev-Narotch sector and at Postavy. The front was wide and well chosen. Our reserves would have been insufficient to close up the

gap. Besides this, it was very difficult to rush them up to the line, owing to the bad railway connection with Lake Narotch. The railway was in process of construction. If the gap were once forced, the rest would follow. The way to Kovno would lie open.

The attacks on the northern portion of our front were made from the south of Lake Drysviaty, near Vidzy, and chiefly from the bridge-heads at Dvinsk and Jakobstadt.

From March 18-21 the situation of the Tenth Army was critical and the numerical superiority of the Russians overwhelming. On the 21st they won a success on the narrow lake sector which affected us gravely, and even the attack west of Postavy was stemmed only with difficulty.

The ground had become soft, and in that marshy country water collected in ponds; the roads were literally bottomless. The reserves which we drew from the Tenth Army could make only slow progress from the Vilna-Dvinsk Railway by wading through the swamps. Every one was strung up to the highest pitch of anxiety, wondering what would happen next.

But the Russians, whose offensive had led them into even heavier ground we had in and behind our positions, were exhausted, and when the Russian offensive gain reached its highest pitch on March 26 we had practically overcome the crisis.

The position of Von Scholtz's army group of the Eighth Army was no less difficult. Although holding a long front, the "Leibhusaren" Brigade was compelled to defend itself at Vidzy against the massed attacks of the enemy. It achieved wonders. Farther north at Dvinsk the enemy made particularly determined attacks. Divisions of the oldest classes fought with the same spirit of sacrifice as the younger comrades at their side.

The front was particularly thin at Jakobstadt, but the West Prussian regiments there did their duty.



FIG. 7. BATTLES AT LAKE NAROTCH, MARCH 1916

The attacks of the enemy collapsed. The Russian offensive was petering out by the end of March. As



had been truly said, without exaggeration, it had been choked in "swamp and blood." The losses suffered by the Russians had been extraordinarily heavy.

Our thin lines, manned by well-trained and brave troops, with their proper quota of officers, had triumphed over the massed attacks of the badly trained Russian Army. The efforts of our troops had been very strenuous, owing to the swampy ground and wet and cold weather.

The front of the Commander-in-chief in the East had survived its first great defensive action.

One would expect such a defensive battle to be less strain on the Higher Command than an offensive, but in reality it is much more nerve-racking. The commander must content himself with providing reserves at the right time, but for this to be possible the reserves must be available. That is a difficult matter when the command is forced to live from hand to mouth, as we had to. Further, it is not easy to make up one's mind to transfer reserves before the direction of the attack is known with certainty, and yet it has to be done, or they will arrive too late. Nor is it easy to expect the subordinate commands to give up their reserves when they themselves anticipate attack. But the cordial relations which existed between Lieutenant-Colonel Hoffmann and myself and the various army commanders enabled us to settle these serious problems without friction, to the general benefit of the army. At the beginning of April things quieted down.

On April 28, in a vigorous operation, carefully prepared by powerful artillery, the Tenth Army recaptured the lost ground between Lake Narotch and Lake Vishniev. It was the first engagement on the Eastern front in which we employed the artillery methods which had now become customary in the West. The result was good.

We reckoned on a continuation of the great Russian offensive. The armies were organized accordingly and reserves held in readiness. By order of General Headquarters certain German divisions with the Austro-Hungarian Army were sent to us. Later in May fresh attacks from the Riga bridge-head and the region of Smorgon seemed imminent. We took measures accordingly, and even contemplated an offensive of our own. But with the inadequate forces at our disposal, this offensive could be only a local one at Riga, with the object of removing that very inconvenient bridge-head.

At the end of May His Majesty visited us. The Kaiser went over the whole of the area controlled by the Commander-in-chief in the East. The Field-Marshal and I accompanied him. We also went to Mitau. I shall never forget how German everything seemed there. Every one who went for the first time to these Baltic provinces had the same feeling, that here was a piece of their own native soil.

At the beginning of June we celebrated the victory of our fleet in the Skager Rack battle, another of those great achievements in the war which influenced the attitude of the neutral states. But our rejoicings were dampened by our losses, which turned out to be heavier than at first reported.

## XII

I had followed the doings of our navy with great interest. In peace-time we had set great store by it. Now, as a fighting-weapon side by side with the army, it had to fight for victory to save us from strangulation by England. It was to be expected that in accordance with England's historical traditions her share in the war would take the form of a ruthless fight against the entire population of the Central Powers, regardless alike of international law or the laws of humanity. It

was clear from the start that our warships could not keep the seas open. The Mediterranean division went to Constantinople.

After the successful Japanese attack on Kiao-chau, whose garrison put up a brave fight, our cruiser squadron in East Asia and the southern Pacific was left without any support and compelled to return to the home harbors. The battle of Coronel on November 1, and that of the Falkland Islands on December 3, 1914, mark the victory, distress, and extinction of our cruiser squadron. These battles fill every German heart with pride and sorrow.

Our cruisers and auxiliary cruisers had sown enemy waters with mines, and from time to time even made the high seas dangerous to the enemy. They brought fresh laurels to German valor, but were unable to accomplish anything decisive. All the same, their deeds were not in vain, for they will ever be a source of pride to the Germans.

The Mediterranean division in the Bosphorus was, on the whole, doomed to inactivity after the Entente had given up the attack on Constantinople. The enemy had a great superiority in the Black and Mediterranean Seas. The Austro-Hungarian Navy was not very enterprising. After Italy's declaration of war it made only a few unimportant raids along the east coast of that country. In the Baltic the fighting strength on each side was such as to enable us to maintain our merchant service. This was of paramount importance to us, on account of the importation of iron ore from Sweden.

The navy fulfilled a part of its duties in maintaining the freedom of the Baltic. This enabled the Commander-in-chief in the East to establish communication between Libau and the German harbors in the Baltic, which was of the utmost importance for the

supply of our troops in Courland. The West Baltic remained a maneuvering ground for our fleet.

The bulk of our fleet was in the North Sea protected by our bases at the mouth of the Elbe, Heligoland, and Wilhelmshaven. We ought to have sought a decisive battle at the beginning of the war. This, indeed, was the desire of Grand Admiral von Tirpitz, though he did not sufficiently insist upon it. Only by this means could we hope to defeat the enemy plans, of which we had no clear idea. After the English naval maneuvers of 1910-11 there were signs that England contemplated an extensive blockade. It was in defiance of international law, and could be carried out only provided that neutrals, particularly the United States, tolerated it.

England avoided battle, although tradition, her strength, and the war situation should have urged her to it. Had England won such a battle it would have made our iron imports from Sweden an impossibility, and the submarine warfare could never have assumed proportions so dangerous to herself. Great Britain preserved her fleet for political reasons. She realized that a battle with the German fleet might cost her not only her place in the world, but also her prestige among her allies and even at home. The other reasons put forward, such as the dearth of docks on the east coast, to enable her to effect swift repairs after battle, are not convincing. It is not to the credit of England's proud navy that she refrained from giving battle.

The naval action in the Heligoland Bight on August 28, 1914, was of no strategical importance. Our cruisers were attracted by the love of adventure. Our fleet was more enterprising than that of the enemy. We bombarded the English coast, that had not been attacked for centuries. The battle on the

Dogger Bank on January 24 was the result of such an attack.

Our naval policy of compelling the English to give battle as near our coasts as possible was pursued more definitely when Admiral Scheer assumed command of the fleet. On May 31, 1916, he successfully achieved his end. He was not afraid, although far from all our naval bases.

Owing to the caution of the hostile fleet our naval fortresses did not appear to be threatened and we were able to withdraw their garrisons.

They went to form the Marine Corps, which was employed on the Flanders coast after the taking of Antwerp. Certain marine divisions also fought with distinction in the land campaigns.

Meanwhile the submarine warfare on enemy ships within a certain zone round England began on February 4, 1915. At the time this was against the advice of Admiral von Tirpitz, who considered such a plan premature. We had a very small number of submarines; I do not know why. In any case, what the U-boats accomplished was realized only during the war as the successes won by the crews increased and they gained in experience. The submarine campaign proclaimed on February 4 did not materialize, as for political reasons it was directed exclusively against enemy merchant-ships. Further restrictions soon followed that entirely crippled it.

After the sinking of the *Lusitania* it fell into abeyance for the time, but was revived for a short time between November 1915 and February 1916. After the sinking of the *Sussex* on March 24, 1916, Germany declared her intention of prosecuting the campaign only according to the rules of the Prize Court. The U-boat warfare was thereupon suspended.

In their fear of submarine warfare our enemies did not

hesitate to call the U-boat a weapon the use of which was contrary to international law and humane principles. This was a surprising doctrine in view of the perpetual violation of international law by the Entente. New weapons of war create new international precedents. The United States acknowledged this in her note to England of March 5, 1915.

Admiral Sir Percy Scott, a man whose opinion carried weight, took up the same attitude in the *Times* of July 16, 1914. He wrote:

"Such a decree—a blockade by means of mines and submarines—would in my opinion be quite regular; and if English and neutral vessels were to ignore the decree and attempt to break through the blockade one could not say that they were following the peaceful pursuits of which Lord Sydenham speaks; were they to be destroyed in the attempt, we could not designate it as a relapse into savagery or piracy in its worst form."

We were within our rights, as far as the submarine war was concerned, in adopting such measures as we considered necessary to serve our purpose in the war, so long as they were in accordance with the laws of humanity and showed due regard for neutrals.

We found the right solution, and no criticism can make any difference, as the future will prove.

At the very beginning of the war, England, in total disregard of international law, started the War of Starvation against Germany and Austria-Hungary. This strangling hunger-blockade was intended so to debilitate the body as to prepare the mind for the poison of propaganda. England had another aim: to make war against the children still unborn, so that a physically inferior race might arise in Germany. A more gruesome method cannot be imagined. England acted with inexorable consistency, as so often before in her cruel history. Step by step, and of set purpose,

the English Government, by Orders in Council of August 20, and October 29, 1914, and other economic and military decrees, suppressed all direct traffic to the German harbors, all imports through neutral countries, and even the import of the products of neutral countries into Germany.

The trump card was the proclamation of the North Sea as a "war zone" on November 2, 1914. The northern approaches to the North Sea were thereby completely cut off, and the neutral trading-vessels were compelled to go through the Channel, close to the English coast, and could then proceed only in one direction, right across the North Sea. And yet at the beginning of the war England had declared that she would in principle accept the convention of the Declaration of London as her standard of action. Her attitude in the years before the war was also quite different.

With the declaration of a "war zone" she had allowed it to be understood that she would no longer consider herself bound by the regulations of cruiser warfare as laid down by the Prize Courts, and also that she considered herself justified in the adoption of violent measures against traffic in the "war zone." Germany was therefore blockaded, although there was no lawful blockade. The only reason why a true blockade was ineffective, according to the rules of naval warfare, was that England was powerless to hinder traffic in the Baltic.

The German declaration of a "war zone" on February 4, 1915, only a similar measure to the English precedent, gave England an excuse for further severity in the economic war against the Central Powers. In the famous Order in Council of March 11, 1915, she declared her intention of seizing all ships entering or leaving Germany. All goods intended for Germany, or exported from there, as well as all goods in German

ownership, or of German origin, even if the property of neutrals, could henceforward be taken from neutral ships.

This was another unexampled instance of putting might before right. England justified herself by declaring this procedure to be an act of reprisal against the submarine warfare commenced in February 1915. This defense fell to the ground when Germany, after the *Sussex* case, formally renounced submarine warfare. Had England acted in accordance with her declarations, she would have raised the so-called blockade, now that the reason for retaliation had lapsed. But she never thought of such a thing. The blockade went on as before.

By Order in Council of June 7, 1916, England finally abandoned the Declaration of London. In this way those principles which, despite repeated assurances, no one had attempted to maintain, were formally denounced. The violation of international law was to be made legal and valid.

We in the East also felt the effects of England's continued violation of the international law. In the long run it was bound to help the cause of the Entente, as the United States, both before and after her entry into the war, had given her sanction, and the neutrals of Europe were in England's power.

### XIII

The German attack at Verdun led to no decisive result. By May it bore the stamp of the first great battle of attrition, in which the struggle for victory meant feeding a stationary fighting-line with a continuous mass of men and materials. The other parts of the Western front were inactive.

On May 15 the Austro-Hungarian offensive against



Italy had at length begun and at first was brilliantly successful, and brought our allies to the Asiago-Arsiero line. But by the end of the month it was clear that the operation had lost its impetus. All was quiet on the Macedonian and Turkish fronts, except for the fighting in Mesopotamia. Kut-el-Amara was taken toward the end of April, but Field-Marshal von der Goltz, who had prepared the way for this victory, did not live to see it. He died of spotted fever shortly before the attack.

In the East there were signs that local attacks on the Austro-Hungarian Army were probable, although the bulk of the Russian Army remained on the German front in readiness to attack us there.

The Entente was planning a powerful assault on its most formidable enemy—the German Army. In the West there was to be the offensive on the Somme. In the East the Russians were to start an offensive, with Baranovici, Smorgon, and Riga as its critical points.

Their operations on the Austro-Hungarian front in the beginning of June, in the region of Lutsk, Tarnopol, and on the Dniester, were more in the nature of a demonstration.

At first much larger reserves were concentrated behind the selected sectors of the German front than in the Lutsk and Bukovina sectors.

Russia's amazing victories over the Austro-Hungarian troops induced her to abandon her proposed offensive against the front of the Commander-in-chief in the East, except for the move in the direction of Baranovici, and concentrate all her efforts against Austria-Hungary. The more the German front proved itself inviolable the more eagerly did the Russians turn from it to hurl themselves against their weaker foe, the Austro-Hungarian Army between the Pripet and the Carpathians.

The front of the Commander-in-chief in the East was therefore denuded as occasion required, in order to bolster up the fronts farther south. A very intimate connection sprang up between the tactical operations of the army group under Field-Marshal Prince Leopold of Bavaria and that of the Commander-in-chief in the East, as, indeed, between the whole German and Austro-Hungarian fronts.

The previous arrangements between the two general staffs had been good enough for periods of inactivity, but never contemplated such a situation as developed out of the Russian offensive. It was now imperative to act quickly. Reference to the two General Headquarters in Charleville or Pless and Teschen might mean a loss of time that could never be recovered. Even in the great March offensive our liaison system had been found inconvenient. We were able to avoid friction only because we always worked so well with the army group of Field-Marshal Prince Leopold of Bavaria and Von Woyrsch's group under his command. From that time the question of a single command had not been lost sight of. First, the proposal to put Prince Leopold's group under the command of the Commander-in-chief in the East was frequently discussed. But a wholesale change—such as war is constantly calling for—was what was required, and that meant that the Commander-in-chief in the East would have to take over the command of the whole Eastern front from the Gulf of Riga to the Carpathians.

But bitter experience was needed before this change was effected. Irrelevant matters that had nothing to do with the issue aggravated the problem. In the first place, the Austrian General Staff, for reasons of so-called prestige, found it difficult to contemplate any limitation of its tactical authority over the Austro-Hungarian troops. In its interpretation of its powers

it jealously maintained the Austrian point of view, of not letting Germany's military predominance become apparent. Germany, on the other hand, considered military necessities and nothing else.

On June 4 the Russian offensive against the Austro-Hungarian front east of Lutsk, at Tarnopol, and immediately north of the Dniester began.

Their attacks were carried out, though the Russians had no decisive superiority in numbers. In the neighborhood of Tarnopol they were completely repulsed by the army of General Count von Bothmer, who had taken over the command of the German Southern Army in succession to General von Linsingen, but they broke through in the two other places and won a complete victory. At both points they penetrated deep into the Austro-Hungarian positions. Things were all the more critical because the Austrians had shown such small powers of resistance that at one blow the whole Eastern front was in dire jeopardy. Although we were anticipating an attack on our front, we immediately started divisions on the southward march. Field-Marshal Prince Leopold of Bavaria's army group also responded to the requirements of the situation. Our General Headquarters made heavy demands upon both groups and also withdrew divisions from the West. The battle of the Somme had not yet begun. Austria gradually broke off the Italian offensive, and sent troops to the Eastern front.

The Italian Army now started a counter-offensive in the Tyrol. The face of the war had changed completely. Not much later the opening of the Somme battle and Rumania's declaration of war was to make our position still more unfavorable.

General Headquarters seems to have had some hope of neutralizing the piercing of our lines by the enemy at Lutsk by a counter-attack (an operation similar to

our successful counter-attack in November and December 1917 at Cambrai) and at the same time holding up the advance of the troops that had broken through so far on the Dniester.

Thanks to the failure of the Austrian defense, the Russian offensive at Lutsk made rapid progress, and, following the railway to Kowel, soon reached the Stochod. The first German reinforcements became involved in the retreat. A new German front was gradually created on the Stochod on both sides of the railway. It was in touch with the Austrian troops, who were still holding the Styr. The Russians had not followed up very smartly in a westerly direction, although a great victory was beckoning them. They had too few reserves at hand to make full use of their opportunity.

At Saturtzky and Kisielin, some way west of the Stochod, the beaten Austrian Army was able to collect its remnants. It was obvious that the wing of the Austrian Army which had escaped at Lutsk would have to swing back quickly to avoid being rolled up. Here again Brussiloff was not strong enough for a really energetic pursuit. The arrival of further reserves strengthened the front on both sides of the Kowel-Lutsk Railway. They came up with the Fourth Army farther south, and somewhere near Gorochow formed a strong counter-offensive group behind the Austrian wing retreating to the southwest. Our critical situation did not allow of our waiting for the arrival of all our reserves in order to attack all together, although Von Linsingen's group always wished to do so.

The counter-attacks of the German troops during the latter half of June and early part of July obtained only local successes. The Russian offensive on the Dniester had broken through the Austrian divisions under General von Pflanzer-Baltin in the Okna (east

of Zaleszsyki)—Sniatin direction, and south of the river soon gained a lot of ground. Czernowitz fell. By the end of June the Russians had reached a line from Tlumacz on the Dniester, to Kolomea and Kimpolung, and were pushing on toward the Carpathian passes.

The Austrian front south of the Dniester, originally a very short one between the river and the Rumanian frontier, had now become very much longer, and this long new line was, of course, now correspondingly thin.

Owing to the extraordinarily bad railway communications reserves could only be brought up with the greatest difficulty. German troops from the front of the Commander-in-chief in the East, as well as the Western front, were conveyed to the Carpathians and the Dniester. Even all the fresh divisions that were thrown in were hardly sufficient to hold the front. In these circumstances counter-attacks were inadvisable. They were attempted by our troops all the same, but remained without result. A pure defense from the start would have been our proper course, as the Russians were also contending against extraordinary difficulties of supply and were not very strong. This fact helped the Austrian Army more than its own defense. Owing to the complete failure of our allies south of the Dniester, General von Bothmer saw himself compelled at the beginning of July to withdraw his right wing from Buczacz as far as the mouth of the Koropiec. Thanks to the excellent influence of our army on the Austrian troops with it, all the Russian attacks had been beaten off.

While the Russian onslaught on the Austrian Army was gaining its first successes, and when the greater part of the Commander-in-chief in the East's and Field-Marshal Prince Leopold of Bavaria's reserves had proceeded to the relief of our allies' front, a violent Russian attack was delivered against Von Woyrsch's

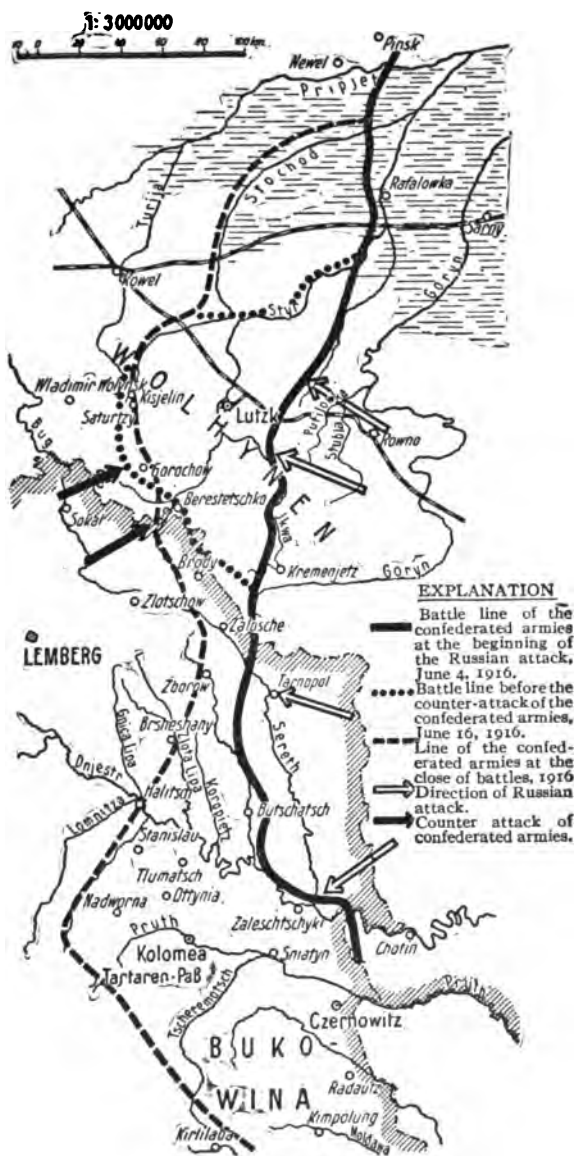


FIG. 8. RUSSIAN ATTACK, 1916

army group on June 13. It collapsed completely after extraordinarily severe fighting. The army group and General von Woyrsch were compelled to throw in all their reserves.

At that time we were anticipating an attack at Smorgon or, as now seemed more probable, on the old battle-fields of March, and at Riga. At these points the Russians were still in very great strength. In spite of this we denuded our front to the utmost to help the armies in the south. We even had battalions to serve as reserves for our long lines. I formed these battalions from men at recruit depots, although I realized that if the Russians had a really great success at any point these units would be but a drop of water on a hot stone. We were absolutely confident that our troops would hold their positions, however thin their lines were. Our anxiety increased with the progress of events.

In the first place, the Russian forces on our front had not been noticeably reduced. They had to decide whether they would really attack us or follow up and consolidate their successes in the south. Of course they realized that we and Austria-Hungary would send reinforcements. They meant to obtain a decision on the Austrian front, but had such large reserves at their disposal that they could attack us in force as well, and thereby prevent us from sending further help to the south. While the Germans and Austrians were concentrating round the Lutsk salient, on the Dniester and in the Carpathians, and in the second half of June making local attacks nearly everywhere, the Russians rushed up reserves to the points where they had broken through and brought the German local efforts to a standstill by counter-attacks.

In the middle of July, after severe fighting, in which the Austrian troops had again shown only slight re-

sisting power, they prevented the Germans from developing their initial successes in the Lutsk salient. They pushed forward southwest to the Styr. General von Boehm-Ermolli found himself compelled to withdraw his left wing and center to the frontier of Galicia. But in the Lutsk salient the Russian offensive was held up.

The enemy gained still more ground south of the Dniester in the direction of the Carpathians.

While all this was taking place at the two main points of attack, the Russians embarked on a violent onslaught on the front of the Commander-in-chief in the East, between Lakes Narotch and Vishniev and at Smorgon, on the army group of Field-Marshal Prince Leopold of Bavaria, northeast and south of Baranovici, and on Von Linsingen's army group in the bend of the Styr. General von Bothmer was also engaged.

In July a terrible struggle was raging on the Eastern front, while in the West England and France were gaining their first successes on the Somme. We managed to hold out against the attacks and beat them off in battles lasting many days.

The line of Von Woyrsch's group was successfully forced at the point where it was held by Austro-Hungarian troops. To fill the gap we threw in all our carefully hoarded reserves. They held their ground, and from July 8 onward the battle here died down.

The Russian offensive at the bend of the Styr, north of Lutsk, was completely successful. The Austro-Hungarian troops let their lines be broken through in several places. The German units that had been sent to help were once more in a critical position, and on July 7 General von Linsingen was compelled to withdraw his left wing behind the Stochod. The right wing of Field-Marshal Prince Leopold of Bavaria's army group and part of Gronau's group, south of the Pripet, had to retire also.



This was one of the greatest crises on the Eastern front. We had little hope that the Austro-Hungarian troops would be able to hold the line of the Stochod, which was unfortified.

We took the risk of denuding our lines still further, and Field-Marshal Prince Leopold of Bavaria followed our example. Although the Russian attack might begin again at any moment, we extended our line and released single regiments in order to support the left wing of Von Linsingen's army group, northeast and east of Kowel. If this wing were to retreat still farther it was impossible to imagine when it would end. Those were terribly anxious days. We gave up everything we had, knowing full well that if the enemy were to attack us no one could help us.

And that is just what happened.

On July 16 the Russians, in enormous force, poured out from the Riga bridge-head west of the Dvina and gained ground at once.

We went through a terrible time until the crisis here was overcome, thanks to the valor of the troops and the careful handling of affairs by the Headquarters Staff of the Eighth Army, which was compelled to use single battalions and batteries as reserves.

These battles were not yet over at the end of July, when there were sure indications that the attacks at Baranovici and along the whole course of the Stochod would be resumed. We awaited these with a sinking heart, for our troops were exhausted by constant fighting and had long fronts to defend. The Austro-Hungarian troops had lost all confidence in themselves and needed German support everywhere.

We could see everything that was going on as far as the Stochod, but farther south we were less in the picture. We knew only that General von Boehm-Ermolli was also now expecting an attack at Brody,

that the Russians were continuing their offensive between the Dniester and the Carpathians in full strength, and that they were gaining ground toward the crest of the ridge.

General Count von Bothmer had stood like a rock in the maelstrom of continuous attacks, and in all essentials remained master of the situation.

It was clear that the Russians were gathering strength for another mighty blow, while we were still bleeding from many wounds on the Somme, and the Austro-Hungarian troops were being hard pressed on the Italian front. Storms were threatening, and our nerves were strung to the highest pitch.

#### XIV

We had maintained the closest touch with General Headquarters during the difficult and anxious days we had passed through in Kovno since the beginning of June. We had repeatedly pointed out the necessity of unity of command on the Eastern front. Of course, if necessary, we could have continued as before, but it had become evident that reserves could be moved about with less friction if the command of the whole Eastern front was under one control. Before the end of June the Field-Marshal and I were summoned to Pless to give our views concerning the position in the East. It could be described only as very grave. Of course we came back to the question of the single command, and in this connection we emphasized the necessity of extending the process of introducing German units into the Austro-Hungarian Army. Also, Austro-Hungarian troops could be used on the quieter parts of the Commander-in-chief in the East's front. We urged very strongly that the Austro-Hungarian troops,

especially the infantry, should be trained on really modern lines.

The journey to Pless was fruitless as regards any settlement of the command question, for the opposition was still too great. But General Headquarters decided to form three divisions for the Austro-Hungarian front from troops taken from the Western and Eastern fronts. These were to be ready for use in Poland about the beginning of August. The desired interchange of German and Austro-Hungarian troops was begun, and we received a battle-worn Austro-Hungarian infantry division, which set free the ten Landwehr divisions of the Tenth Army. This was immediately handed over to General von Linsingen. In the critical battle-situation a second Austro-Hungarian division, which had been placed at our disposal, could not now be withdrawn.

The Austro-Hungarian Army had arranged its reserves in such a way that at given intervals each infantry regiment had a so-called "march battalion," composed of reservists, assigned to it. These battalions were often attached to the regiments as fighting battalions. Regiments that had not suffered at all sometimes contained five or six battalions instead of three; whereas the strengths of others were often very low. What was wanted was an even distribution, and this was uncommonly difficult on account of the many nationalities among the Austro-Hungarian troops. National distinctions among the men were also maintained.

What was still more grave was the very inadequate training of the march battalions. They served only to swell our losses in prisoners. We had to take a hand in the training of these march battalions, and we did. We thereby discovered much good and useful material in the ranks, but the officers, who were then still

under the control of the Austro-Hungarian command, were of poor quality and not trained to that strict sense of duty which distinguishes our German officers.

On July 27 we were again summoned to Pless. The news of the fall of Brody, which reached us that day, induced the Austro-Hungarian General Staff to modify its attitude to a certain extent. It agreed to let Field-Marshal von Hindenburg take over command of the whole front as far as south of Brody. The armies of General Count von Bothmer and General von Pflanzer-Baltin formed already one army group under the Archduke Charles, with General von Seeckt as Chief of Staff. We were still under the German General Headquarters. The Archduke Charles's group was under the Austro-Hungarian General Headquarters as before. The Austrians could not make up their minds to go the whole way, but still the new arrangement offered such considerable advantages that I regarded it as a great step in the right direction.

We then returned to Kovno, where I said farewell to the place in which I had spent a happy period of quiet work, and latterly lived through such critical hours. I left many loyal colleagues behind me in the administrative services. The military staff remained unchanged.

I had first proposed to visit the Army Headquarters of the former Austrian front, in order to form my own opinion of the situation. The position of our new headquarters had not yet been settled. There was no question of remaining in Kovno—it lay too far north. For the present we decided to use our special train. General von Eichhorn, while retaining his command of the Tenth Army, took over the command of Von Scholtz's army group and the Eighth Army. The Twelfth Army was assigned to the command of Field-Marshal Prince Leopold of Bavaria.

## UNITY OF COMMAND ON THE EASTERN FRONT, AUGUST 1916

Visits to Our Colleagues—Renewed Russian Offensives

(See Fig. 8, page 263.)

### I

ON August 3 or 4 we were in Kowel, the headquarters of General von Linsingen. His Chief of Staff was Colonel Hell, hitherto Chief of Staff on the Tenth Army. He had taken over his new duties in July, and was the right man in the right place to deal with this extraordinarily difficult situation.

The Eastern front had passed through another critical period. The terrific Russian offensive had burst on us, and the end of the fighting could not be foreseen. We were heavily engaged, and there was slight hope of relief. There were too many troops of the oldest classes on the Eastern front, and we did not like to place such men in the hottest corners.

While the attacks at Riga were dying down, the Russians resumed their offensive on July 23, north of Baranovici, where they imagined they were facing Austro-Hungarian troops and had some success. But this had since been limited by a German counter-attack.

The Russian attack, carried out with great violence on the 25th and 27th, remained without result.

The actions on the front of Von Linsingen's army

group had been continued into the second half of July. They never actually came to an end. The strain on this group was severe. The front was not firm.

On July 28 the big Russian offensive on the Stochod had begun, and continued with unprecedented violence until the evening of August 1. The Russians had assembled enormously superior numbers, and continuously fed their line regardless of losses. At several points there had been very critical moments. German Landwehr had to drive the enemy out of those parts of the Austro-Hungarian lines which he had penetrated. Even the German troops were forced to give ground, as their front was thin and their losses heavy. But finally we threw everything into the scale and the front held.

The fighting had extended northward and involved Gronau's army group, which, in spite of the fact that its strength was inadequate for so extended a front, put up a strong defense with exemplary coolness. They employed their few reserves with the greatest economy, and always had something in hand to support General von Linsingen's extreme left wing.

The staff of this group naturally took a grave view of the situation, but its resolution was unshaken. There was no doubt that, despite their terrific losses, the Russians would soon resume their offensive and continue it for some time. They had plenty of men, but used them recklessly, and such tactics promised no success, even against our thin lines. The staff of the army group hoped to remain master of the situation.

In Kowel I also saw General von Bernhardt, who commanded the sector along and between the railway connecting Kowel, Lutsk, and Sarny. He was a born soldier, inspired with an ardent love for his country.

In the evening we were at Wladimir-Wolynsk, the headquarters of the Austro-Hungarian Fourth Army, which was in General von Linsingen's command. This

army had been thoroughly stiffened with German troops. Its Commander-in-chief, Colonel-General von Tertszczanski, an excitable officer, was so obsessed with the idea of the "Austrian prestige" that he gave General von Linsingen a good deal of trouble. We dined with him. March battalions, as a guard of honor for the Field-Marshal, lined the route from the station to the mess. The men made a very favorable impression upon us.

On this occasion Colonel-General von Tertszczanski spoke with remarkable frankness of the behavior of the Austro-Hungarian troops during the recent battles. The picture he gave us was anything but cheerful.

Next morning we were in Lemberg, the headquarters of the Second Austro-Hungarian Army. I was surprised by the beauty and German appearance of Lemberg. In this respect it formed a striking contrast with Cracow, which is characteristically Polish.

In General von Boehm-Ermolli and his Chief of Staff, General Bardolph, we found two very shrewd and clear-sighted soldiers, with whom it was a pleasure to work. They had no illusions about the low powers of resistance of their troops.

At the end of July, after the Russian attacks, the army had been withdrawn west of Brody and the upper Sereth. Both officers were delighted to hear that a mixed German division could be put at their disposal for use in the immediate future. They regarded the continuation of the enemy offensive as a certainty. We enjoyed the congenial company of the officers of this staff for a few hours longer, and left them with the feeling that they were fully confident. But on the front, in spite of our strong positions, we anticipated a critical situation in view of the imminent Russian offensive, as we could not possibly send reserves up in time.

In Lemberg I also had a few words with General von Seeckt, who took a serious view of the position of the Archduke Charles's group, especially south of the Dniester.

The Russians had thrust hard against the line west of Tlumacz-Ottynia, and in places reached the crest of the Carpathians between Tartar Pass and the frontier of Rumania.

The fate of the Archduke Charles's group was a matter of life and death to us. The grave position in which it stood was naturally of the greatest concern to us. If this group retired any farther south of the Dniester the left wing and then the right of the extended Eastern front would be carried back with it. We had continually to allow for the situation of this group. We gave it all the help we could, although it was not under our command.

The 1st Infantry Division, which had already fought in the Carpathians in the winter of 1915, was now, by order of our General Headquarters, on its way through Hungary to this sector. I should have preferred to have it north of the Carpathians, as there was little chance that the Russians would attempt to envelop our extreme right wing between our front and the Carpathians. Their communications behind their line were much too bad, and this danger could never become serious. It would always be possible to meet it in time, despite the incredible railway communications in Hungary. But the Austrian General Staff, at Teschen, feared a Russian invasion of Hungary, and their cries for help proved stronger than military considerations.

On the return journey to Brest-Litovsk, where we intended to remain for the present in our train, we discussed matters with General von der Marwitz and General von Litzmann, who now commanded mixed Ger-



man and Austro-Hungarian troops in Von Linsingen's army group. They regarded their position, if the Russians resumed their attacks—and this they anticipated—as very grave, basing their fears on their experiences in recent actions. Both General von der Marwitz and General von Litzmann were splendid soldiers and fearless leaders, who had the well-being and efficiency of their men very much at heart.

We heard the same story everywhere. The situation in the East remained as critical as ever.

I had set myself the double task of consolidating the front and training the troops of the Austro-Hungarian Army. With what measure of success was doubtful.

## II

Our headquarters in the train in Brest-Litovsk station was anything but ideal. We were really very poorly housed. There was no room for work. The big maps alone took a lot of space, to say nothing of our clerical staff. The way in which Lieutenant-Colonel Hoffmann made the most of what he called his "salon" was a source of continuous amazement. The other officers had even less room, and, on top of all this the sun beat pitilessly down on the roofs of the carriages and made our stay unendurable. I decided, therefore, to leave the train as soon as possible, and suggested to the Field-Marshal that we should find quarters in Brest-Litovsk itself. The members of the staff had a mild shock. The town had been burned to the ground and was out of the question; the citadel was a little prison. The commandant of the fortress had made it his residence, and fixed up his offices there, but labor had been too scarce for him to make it really suitable. The whole place was neglected and overgrown, for nothing had been done for a long time past.

Nettles ran wild and the air was damp and musty. The barracks were still there, but there was not a stick of furniture. But this was nothing; we had to decide something.

I made arrangements for our headquarters to be established in the citadel. Of course, it took a considerable time before everything was ready and we could leave the train.

I liked being in Brest, and did not leave the citadel. The remarkably fine tall willows, with their boughs drooping into the water which flowed through the citadel, and the few short avenues gave the whole a pleasant aspect. Desolation reigned outside the fortress. The ugly but highly important railway junction and the gutted town offered few attractions.

I had the barracks cleared of the invading creepers, so that the air could get to the walls and dry out the damp; trees were also felled and branches lopped, to allow the sun and air to get in. I took pleasure in putting things to rights.

German troops were needed to stiffen the Austro-Hungarian front. The old front of the Commander-in-chief in the East had already been so heavily drawn upon that no further demands could be made upon it for the time being.

The heavy attack south of Riga had just been repulsed, but it was quite likely to be renewed.

We released a few cavalry regiments, a mixed division, about three battalions strong, and some batteries under General Melior. We had already promised these to the Austro-Hungarian Army, and they were immediately despatched. Our only reserve for a front of about one thousand kilometers now consisted of but one cavalry brigade, strengthened by artillery and machine guns—certainly not an enviable position, considering that we had to prepare at any

moment to send help to any point of an enormous front. This is but one further example of what we Germans achieved. The cavalry brigade was also destined for the Austro-Hungarian Army, and was to be attached to Melior's detachment.

Other forces were available to General Headquarters for use in the East. The Turkish 15th Corps was coming. Enver had decided, in view of the critical position in the East, to send an army corps from the Constantinople district to the Eastern front. The German General Headquarters intended to strengthen Von Linsingen's group with this division. The billeting officers were actually on the scene at the beginning of August, when the situation of the Archduke Charles's group determined General Headquarters to deflect the Turkish corps, which had only a few trains at its disposal, to East Galicia. The Turks fought well with the German Southern Army, although they had to learn and practise what to them were entirely novel methods of warfare.

The formation of the three divisions which General Headquarters had ordered in July for the East was nearly complete, and I should have been glad to have had them at my disposal at once. General Headquarters did not consent, as it did not consider them fit for action yet. A few days later, however, two were handed over to us, while the third was attached to the Archduke Charles's group.

The Russians had by this time realized that they could do nothing against the German front, and did not again attack north of the Pripet. They intensified their pressure in Wolhynia and East Galicia and brought up fresh forces to these points. Even in the first half of August their attacks here were resumed.

On August 8 and 9 the Russians again attacked Von Linsingen's group and the right wing of Gronau's

group along their whole front, and were repulsed. Even if the main offensive had come to an end, severe fighting was still in progress, especially along the Stochod east and northeast of Kowel. The Russians succeeded in gaining a footing in a few places on the western bank. This was not in itself of decisive importance, but it made things very difficult for Von Linsingen's group, which was being taxed to the uttermost and suffering heavy losses. It compelled us to detrain our cavalry at Kowel.

Simultaneously with the attack on Kowel, Russian attacks against the Second Austro-Hungarian Army and the Archduke Charles's group in Galicia met with success. The right wing of the Austro-Hungarian Army was broken through at Zaloscz; Melior's detachment prevented the worst, but the front was so rickety that we withdrew it to Zborow. The two new divisions placed at our disposal were put under General von Eben, commanding the 1st Corps, and they just sufficed ultimately to hold the Zborow sector in severe and prolonged fighting. They had come too late to defend the Sereth sector.

When this was abandoned by the right wing of the Second Army, the left wing of Von Bothmer's army, which had until then stood its ground, had to retreat also. South of the Dniester the Russians had again attacked at Tlumacz, the Austro-Hungarian troops had thrown them back and taken Stanislaw and Nadworna. Here their attacks had been victorious, but in the Carpathians the German troops, under General von Conta—including the 1st Infantry Division—had denied them any success.

I considered it of the highest importance that we should not suffer reverses in Galicia, in view of their effect on Rumania. But the withdrawal of General Count von Bothmer's army, notwithstanding its stout

and prolonged assistance, was unavoidable in view of events south of the Dnieper.

It withdrew, keeping touch with the Austro-Hungarian Army to the Zborow-Brzeszany line behind the Zlota Lipa, and bent its right wing in the direction of Stanislaw. So, in the middle of August the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Army seemed manifestly possible. The attitude of Rumania grew ever more doubtful.

From the middle of August onward the new front, under the control of the Commander-in-chief in the East, began to hold.

The Second Austro-Hungarian Army, which, after all, now received our cavalry reserve from Kowel, was placed in support at Brody. It was also so stiffened with German troops that its positions could be regarded as secure. As far as numbers are concerned, the Austro-Hungarian troops would have been quite able to hold their positions without German help. But that was impossible in their present condition, and we had to come to the rescue. We helped as much as we could, but the blood shed by German troops with the Austro-Hungarian Army could never be made good.

Von Linsingen's army group was endeavoring to bring order into its units and form reserves. We sent this group the 1st Landwehr Division from Mitau, which the Russians were leaving in great numbers.

The construction of positions was pushed on, and in this connection we had to supply the Second Austro-Hungarian Army with a great deal of barbed wire. The rear communications were also organized. It was a case of doing everything we had done farther north in the previous autumn, when the armies of the Commander-in-chief in the East took to trench warfare after our offensive ended. The conditions of trench

construction were similar. We had to start everything from the beginning.

Of course, the establishment of a railway network was, on the whole, easier, for whereas the front was then advancing beyond its communications, it was now being forced back on them. All the same, there was a great deal to be done on the Austro-Hungarian railway system; new lines had to be begun and a network of field and light railways constructed close behind the army.

Special lines-of-communication arrangements had to be made in Lemberg for the German divisions in the Second Austro-Hungarian Army, and the same applied to Hungary for the divisions fighting in the Carpathians.

We made a beginning with the training of the march formations on our own principles, and they were to be inspected by German generals. Colonel Prince Oscar of Prussia, who was responsible for the training of the Austrian march battalions in the German Southern Army, did very valuable work.

German artillery brigade-commanders taught the Austro-Hungarian artillery, which stood very high as regards the technical side of its work, the conduct of an artillery action as required in great modern battles. We initiated the practice, though on a small scale, of exchanging officers. Nothing was left undone that could possibly help to prevent any further reverses to the Austro-Hungarian Army, such as we had witnessed in June.

There were very many matters, great and small, to be attended to, and the time spent in the citadel of Brest-Litovsk passed quickly.

On August 27 Rumania declared war on Austria-Hungary. The Dual Monarchy thereby reaped the reward of Hungary's selfish policy and we the fruit of our passive acquiescence.

On the 28th, at one o'clock in the forenoon, the Chief of the Military Cabinet, General von Lyncker, telephoned General von Hindenburg and myself that His Majesty the Kaiser commanded our presence in Pless at once.

That same day, at 4 P.M., we left Brest, never again to return to the Eastern front. Behind us lay two years of strenuous, united work, and mighty victories.

**MY APPOINTMENT AS  
FIRST QUARTERMASTER-GENERAL**

*From August 29, 1916, to October 26, 1918*





# THE ENTENTE OFFENSIVE IN THE AUTUMN OF 1916

Germany and Her Allies—The Reasons for the Campaign Against Rumania—Bulgaria's Conduct of the War—Turkey's Conduct of the War—The General Conduct of the War—The Military and Political Direction of the German Empire—Impressions of the Western Front—The Battle of the Somme and the First Operations Against Rumania—On the Eve of a Decision in Rumania—The Wallachian Campaign.

(Maps X and XI)

## I

GENERAL VON LYNCKER received us on our arrival in Pless, about ten o'clock in the morning of August 29. He informed me that Field-Marshal von Hindenburg had been appointed Chief of the General Staff of the field army, and that I was to be second chief. The title "First Quartermaster-General" seemed to me more appropriate. In my opinion there could be only one Chief of the General Staff; but, in any case, I had been expressly assured that I should have joint responsibility in all decisions and measures that might be taken.

When His Majesty received us he expressed the hope that the crisis at the front would be overcome, and the Imperial Chancellor, who was present in Pless at the time, spoke to the same effect. The subject of peace was not touched upon by him. The gravity of the situation must have often brought it to mind. The enemy's intentions prevented any steps being taken.

My position was a thankless one, as I fully realized. I entered on my duties with a sacred desire to do and think of nothing that did not contribute to bring the war to a victorious end. For this purpose alone had the Field-Marshal and I been called upon. The task was perfectly enormous. The awful feeling of responsibility did not leave me for a single instant. The field of action was in many respects entirely new and uncommonly comprehensive. The amount of work involved was quite unprecedented. Never has Fate before suddenly placed so heavy a burden on human shoulders. With bowed head I prayed God the All-Knowing to give me strength for my new office.

The circumstances in which the Field-Marshal and I had been summoned to take supreme command were extremely critical. Whereas we had hitherto been able to conduct our great war of defense by that best means of waging war—the offensive—we were now reduced to a policy of pure defense.

The Entente had gathered up all its strength for a mighty and, as it thought, last great blow, thrown us on the defensive, and brought Rumania into the field.

It was to be expected that the attacks on the Western front, in Italy, Macedonia, and south of the Pripet, would be intensified, while the Rumanians, reinforced by Russians, would burst into Transylvania on our exposed right flank, or invade Bulgaria from the Dobrudja. Somewhere or other we were to receive our death-blow.

We also had to reckon on increased enemy activity in the Asiatic theater. We were engaged in a battle of Titans, unparalleled in history. Our nerves and muscles braced themselves instinctively, for it was a question of saving the Fatherland from a position of extreme peril, as we had done at Tannenberg and in the

operations around Lodz in less complicated but no less serious circumstances. At the moment I could not then fully appreciate how severely Rumania's entrance into the war would affect us economically. The critical military decisions we made in September were not dictated by that aspect of affairs.

In this death-grapple Germany and her allies had been cut off from the world by a monstrous conspiracy, and thrown back upon their own resources; they were facing the great military Powers of Europe, who had the whole world at their disposal.

After the failure of the first great blow against France in 1914 there had been no change in the situation, and Field-Marshal von Moltke's prophetic words of May 14, 1890, had become a fact:

"If the war, which for more than ten years has been hanging over our heads like the sword of Damocles—if this war ever comes, its duration and end cannot be foretold. The greatest Powers of Europe will oppose one another, armed as they have never been before. Not one of them could be so completely overthrown in one or two campaigns that it would be compelled to admit defeat and declare its readiness to accept the hard conditions that peace would mean without rising again to renew the struggle within a year. It might be a Seven, it might be a Thirty Years' War. . . ."

The longer the war lasted the more acutely we felt the overwhelming superiority of the enemy in numbers and war material.

On our side the first two years had exacted a heavy toll; the flower of our fighting strength lay under the sod. But the army was still strong and resolute, and had been able to preserve or liberate, not only the frontiers of the Fatherland, but also those of its allies in the European theater.

Only on the Eastern front had we now suffered a

reverse, and that because the fighting power of the Austro-Hungarian Army was still on the decline.

We had succeeded in calling a halt to our retreat there. We were to retain our power to do so, but it demanded further German help. Austria-Hungary continued to be a drain on German blood and German war industries. Her most pressing needs were coal and railway material.

The same was true of Bulgaria and Turkey, although the demand for troops was not so great, but their concern was for money, military equipment, and transport material. Germans had to help everywhere. We did so, in many cases without the necessary return.

The burden on us was certainly directly relieved by our allies. Without them the war would have been unthinkable; they did their share valiantly, but considered they had a natural right to approach us with a constant succession of demands, although their efforts in no way equaled ours. The longer the war lasted the more detrimental these constant allied claims on Germany became to the Quadruple Alliance as a whole. The whole gigantic burden of this war lay on our shoulders.

The enemy had been constantly adding to his numbers since the beginning of the war. Italy had come in. All the Powers had created new formations and summoned all their auxiliaries to arms. Now Rumania came in against us with 250,000 men. So, despite the adhesion of Bulgaria and Turkey to our cause, and the constant additions to and changes in our war machinery, we were still greatly inferior in numbers. We had six millions at the front against ten millions of the enemy.

The equipment of the Entente armies with war material had been carried out on a scale hitherto unknown. The battle of the Somme showed us every day how great was the advantage of the enemy in this respect.

When we added to this the hatred and immense determination of the Entente, its starvation-blockade or strangle-hold, and its mischievous and lying propaganda, which were so dangerous for us, it was quite obvious that our victory was inconceivable unless Germany and her allies threw into the scale everything they had, both in man-power and industrial resources, and unless every man who went to the front carried with him from home a resolute faith in victory and an unshakable conviction that the German Army must conquer for the sake of the Fatherland. The soldier on the battle-field, who endures the most terrible strain that any man can undergo, stands, in his hour of need, in dire want of this moral reinforcement from home, to enable him to stand firm and hold out at the front.

In the situation in which the Field-Marshal and I found ourselves, and in view of our whole conception of the character of this war and the enemy's determination to destroy us, we considered it essential to develop the economic, physical, and moral strength of the Fatherland to the highest degree.

General Headquarters's demands on the Imperial Government comprised man-power, war material, and moral resolution.

We endeavored, as far as we could, to influence our allies in the same sense. Austria had already raised the age limits of the Landsturm to fifty-five, and Turkey raised the limit of liability to service to fifty. So they made the utmost use of their man-power—at any rate, on paper.

In such a situation General Headquarters had to devote more attention than ever to the question of using the resources of the occupied territories.

These were the definite changes made by General Headquarters for the future.

The Chief of the Naval Staff advocated unrestricted submarine warfare, which would apply to neutral ships also in the barred zone. That was the most effective assistance that the navy could render the army in its desperate struggle.

It was doubtful whether the enemy's naval forces would again give battle; an attempt to bring it on had been made in August, but without result. Enemy mine-fields progressively restricted the freedom of movement of our High Seas fleet and limited its use.

The question of the unrestricted U-boat war was discussed as early as August 30 at the request of the Imperial Chancellor.

It was a matter of immediate concern to the Field-Marshal and myself that any part of our naval forces should simply lie idle in this contest of nations. It was not enough help for the army merely to keep the Baltic open and contribute the Naval Corps in Flanders, while the operations of the Entente received decisive assistance from its navy. Only with extreme regret could we refuse to pronounce in favor of unrestricted submarine warfare, on the ground that, in the opinion of the Imperial Chancellor, it might possibly lead to war with Denmark and Holland. We had not a man to spare to protect ourselves against these states, and even if their armies were unaccustomed to war, they were in a position to invade Germany and give us our death-blow. We should have been defeated before the effects, promised by the navy, of an unrestricted U-boat campaign could have made themselves felt.

The discussion, however, afforded an opportunity of overhauling our defensive arrangements on the Danish and Dutch frontiers. The northern command at Hamburg was instructed to fortify these frontier lines. The Governor-General in Brussels was asked to hurry

on, as much as available labor permitted, the construction of fortified lines on the Belgian frontier, of which a beginning had already been made.

## II

On the Western front the Verdun battle was dying down, and in the early days of July the battle on the Somme had not brought the Entente the break-through it hoped for.

The second battle of attrition of the year 1916 had since then been in full swing on both banks of the Somme, and was raging with unprecedented fury and without a moment's respite.

Verdun had exacted a very great price in blood. The position of our attacking troops grew more and more unfavorable. The more ground they gained the deeper they plunged into the wilderness of shell-holes, and apart from actual losses in action they suffered heavy wastage merely through having to stay in such a spot, not to mention the difficulty of getting up supplies over a wide, desolate area. The French enjoyed a great advantage here, as the proximity of the fortress gave them a certain amount of support. Our attacks dragged on, sapping our strength. The very men who had fought so heroically at Verdun were terrified at this shell-ravaged region. The command had not its heart in its work. The Crown Prince had very early declared himself in favor of breaking off the attack.

When the battle of the Somme began the Entente had a tremendous superiority both on land and in the air. General Headquarters was surprised at first. Reinforcements were quickly thrown in, but it had never succeeded in wiping out the enemy's superiority in artillery, munitions, and aircraft, even to a limited extent.



The Entente troops had worked their way farther and farther into the German lines. We had heavy losses in men and material. At that time the front lines were still strongly held. The men took refuge in dugouts and cellars from the enemy's artillery fire. The enemy infantry, coming up behind their barrage, got into the trenches and villages before our men could crawl out from their shelters. A continuous yield of prisoners to the enemy was the result. The strain on physical and moral strength was tremendous, and divisions could be kept in the line only for a few days at a time. They had to be frequently relieved and sent to recuperate on quiet fronts. It was impossible to leave them behind the line—we had not enough men. The number of available divisions was shrinking. In view of the shortage of artillery, it was now kept in the line, even when the divisions were relieved. Divisions which were released by battle-worn divisions had, in turn, to leave their artillery behind them and come up behind the battle-front. The result was that units were hopelessly mixed up.

The shortage of ammunition increased daily. General Headquarters received the ammunition from the War Office in the form of ammunition-trains, which I myself distributed daily among the armies. I was always hearing what they required, and knew how little I could give them. Mine was indeed a sad and harassing task.

The situation on the Western front gave cause for greater anxiety than I had anticipated, but at that time I did not realize its full significance. It was just as well. Otherwise I should never have had the courage to make the important decision to transfer still more divisions from the heavily engaged Western front to the Eastern in order to recover the initiative there and deal Rumania a decisive blow.

The Field-Marshal and I intended, as soon as conditions allowed, to go to the Western front to see for ourselves how matters really stood there. Our task was to organize a stiffer defense and advise generally. But before we went there some divisions were got ready for Rumania, and His Majesty the Emperor was induced to give the momentous order for the cessation

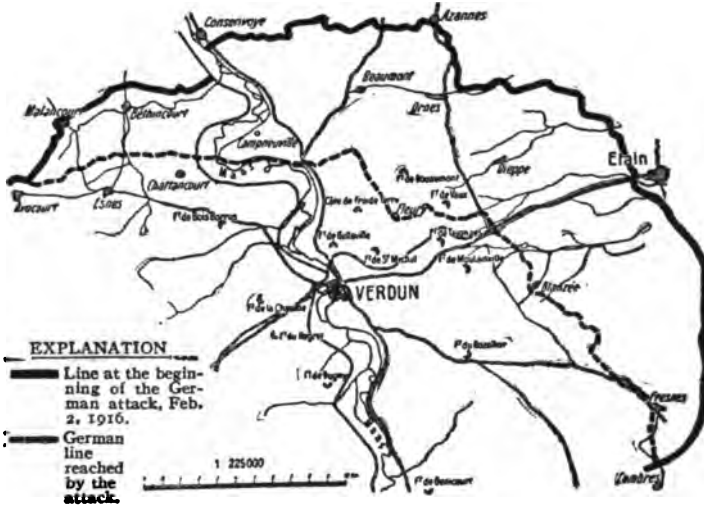


FIG. 9. VERDUN, 1916.

of the offensive at Verdun. That offensive should have been broken off immediately it assumed the character of a battle of attrition. The gain no longer justified the losses. On the defensive we had only to hold out in a battle of attrition forced upon us.

On the Italian front, too, the situation had become worse. In the north the Austrian troops as early as July retired to the heights north of the Asiago-Arsiero line, and in the course of a further Isonzo battle in August had to abandon positions they had long held.

Gorizia and, south of it, a portion of the Doberdo Plateau of the Carso were left in the hands of the Italians. Here, too, the fighting power and resolution of the Austrian Army had diminished. General von Conrad, whom we saw very shortly afterward, said that the army had already protected the frontier for one and a quarter years, and would continue to do so. More he could not say. This in itself was not particularly cheering.

Field-Marshal Prince Leopold of Bavaria had taken over the command of the German Eastern front. I had asked that Lieutenant-Colonel Hoffmann might be given my former position, for I knew that then the work would continue on the same lines. The army group which the Prince had commanded hitherto was transferred to General von Woyrsch, who kept his own army as well. We anticipated further fighting there with a certain sense of security, although the crisis, especially as regards Von Linsingen's group, was not by any means over.

The Archduke Charles's group had not yet been able to make a stand, and a further retreat was only to be expected.

When Rumania declared war the Carpathians assumed a new importance. There was no longer any need for our southern wing to carry out its enveloping mission between the Dniester and Moldavia, for the whole of Rumania now constituted a wide field for maneuver, and the movement might have far-reaching effects.

Austria-Hungary had done nothing to protect her right flank and Transylvania, either in peace or in war. The railway system was inadequate and the capacity of the few existing lines extremely small. Fortifications had not been erected, in order not to "irritate" Rumania. But Austria-Hungary herself had calmly

looked on while Rumania built works on Transylvanian soil close to the frontier.

At the eleventh hour weak forces were hastily concentrated there and battalions formed of miners. But there were yawning gaps everywhere. In the north Russian as well as Rumanian troops pushed their way across the frontier of Moldavia and Wallachia down to the Danube and into Transylvania and Hungary. The important mountain passes fell into the enemy's hands without a shot being fired. Kronstadt and Petroszeny, with their coal-mines, were occupied as early as August 29. Rumanian patrols were soon seen in Hermannstadt. Orsova was taken by the enemy. If the Rumanians' advance were not stopped, not only would Archduke Charles's army group be enveloped, but the way into the heart of Hungary and to our lines of communication with the Balkan Peninsula would be free. That would mean our defeat.

We were now faced with the difficult problem of holding both the Western and Eastern fronts against all hostile attacks, supporting Archduke Charles's army and effecting a concentration against Rumania, which would be not merely a guaranty of defense, but enable us to pass to the offensive. The execution of this task was made all the more difficult by the appeals of the Archduke Charles's group for reinforcements, which ought really to have been sent to Transylvania.

General Headquarters found itself compelled to withdraw more and more divisions from other fronts. The concentration against Rumania was deferred. Not a single man more could be spared from the Western front. The Commander-in-chief in the East received instructions to withdraw units from various points of his already thinly held front, and to form new divisions. Everything was staked on our decision to make the most of our superior mobility in comparison with the

Entente and deal with Rumania in one great strategic maneuver; but how and when this could be accomplished could not be seen at the beginning of September.

The first step to be taken in the carrying out of our plans was to stop the advance of the whole front on both sides of the Carpathians, from the left to the right wing. The front had to be extended into Transylvania, approximately along the river Maros above and below Maros Vasarhely, while we attacked the Rumanians from Bulgaria (although we were strong there), in accordance with the plan of the former Chief of the General Staff.

After the campaign against Serbia had been brought to an end Field-Marshal von Mackensen handed over the command of the Bulgarian-Macedonian front to the Bulgarian General Staff, although he himself remained in the Balkans. When relations with Rumania became increasingly acute he had made preparations for the opening of hostilities, and on August 28 had taken over command of the German, Austro-Hungarian, Bulgarian, and Ottoman troops on the Danube and the Dobrudja frontier. The only forces he had at his disposal were: west of Orsova, the Austrian Danube flotilla, very weak Bulgarian Landsturm of the older classes, employed in watching the Danube; at Rustchuk, Colonel Bode's mixed German detachment, drawn from the German troops in Macedonia, and a Bulgarian infantry division. Other weak Bulgarian forces were posted to the east of the railway line from Bulgaria into the Dobrudja. Several heavy German batteries and a Turkish division were on their way, but only at the rate of two to four trains a day, as the railways of northern Bulgaria could not cope with more.

Bulgaria's attitude to Rumania was most uncertain. While Germany and Turkey declared their solidarity

with their allies immediately after Rumania's declaration of war on Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria did not think fit to do so until September 1. She made no definite stipulations as to her reward for her military assistance, such as the cession of the whole of the Dobrudja. At that time the situation on the Macedonian front was responsible for a certain reserve on Bulgaria's part.

According to the arrangements arrived at between General von Falkenhayn and the allies, Field-Marshal von Mackensen was to cross the Danube in the direction of Bucharest with the troops under his command. General von Conrad had favored this operation wholeheartedly, because he thought it promised corresponding relief in Transylvania. The outcome of this movement might mean the defeat of Field-Marshal von Mackensen's weak army, either on the northern bank of the Danube or by an advance of the Rumanians and Russians over the Dobrudja frontier, which at that time was insufficiently protected. Field-Marshal von Hindenburg and I rejected this plan, and advocated the invasion of the Dobrudja by Field-Marshal von Mackensen. This would also be the best means of parrying a possible thrust into Bulgaria from the Dobrudja. The idea of crossing the Danube could be considered only when the operations against the Rumanian armies in Transylvania made further progress. Later events proved how dangerous this crossing was. General von Conrad accepted the altered plans reluctantly, the Bulgarians very readily, for the Dobrudja was calling. Enver of course agreed.

Field-Marshal von Mackensen received instructions accordingly. While the situation on the northern Rumanian front was still particularly uncertain and looked dangerous, we attacked in the Dobrudja.

## III

The bulk of the Bulgarian Army was on the Greek frontier. It was stiffened by German staffs, about one German division, and other German troops, particularly artillery and machine gun, telephone, and flying units. Further, Bulgaria received from us, and in a considerably less degree from Austria-Hungary, money and plenty of war material. The Bulgarian railways were far from efficient. We had to take drastic steps to improve their working condition.

The Entente had conveyed to Salonika the reorganized Serbian Army, as well as forces of its own, but had remained inactive. General Sarraïl had been appointed Commander-in-chief, and marked his entry into office by laying a strong hand on Greece and forming units of Venizelist troops. In Albania Austro-Hungarian forces had been stationed since the spring west of Lake Ochrida, south of Berat, and on the lower Vojusa. The Italians had occupied Valona, and extended their bridge-head into northern Epirus, which had been annexed by Greece.

However, the Entente front between the Adriatic Sea and the Mediterranean was not yet continuous. We were in touch with Greece by the very difficult Koritza route, but this was of no value. Greece was so firmly in the grip of the Entente, and so dependent on it for her very existence, that no one could seriously think it possible to win her over to us.

The Bulgarian Army, and Bulgaria herself, were willing to continue the war just so long as it furthered their national ambition to become the chief Power in the Balkans. For this the Bulgarian Army, which had not, it is true, yet completely recovered from the effects of the two Balkan Wars, was fighting. No

military action was to be expected from Bulgaria in any other allied theater of war.

When Turkey joined Germany in 1914 Bulgaria had, as the price of her neutrality, demanded Turkish territory on the right bank of the Maritza, and a belt ten kilometers wide on the left bank, from Adrianople to the sea. In return for her entry into the war against Serbia she laid claim to Serbian territory, and, in the event of Rumania joining in, she demanded the whole of the so-called Bulgarian Dobrudja, which had been ceded to Rumania by the Peace of Bucharest in 1913. Agreements made in the autumn of 1915 regarding the co-operation of German and Austro-Hungarian troops applied only to the Serbian campaign, and no longer held good. The territory conquered in that campaign had been placed under the jurisdiction of Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria. The dividing line was, approximately, the river Morava from its confluence to Pristina-Prizrend, and then the course of the river Drina.

The Headquarters Staff of the German Eleventh Army on the Macedonian front controlled the sector on the both sides of the river Vardar. Here was the bulk of the German troops, though we had detachments on other parts of the front. The lines-of-communication inspectorate was at Nish. We had not kept for ourselves one lines-of-communication area in Serbian territory. Only the railways were under our administration. We may thus have avoided political difficulties, but the German troops had to suffer considerable inconvenience as a result of our moderation. Incorporated in the Bulgarian Army as they were, they did not meet with that assistance which they had a right to expect so far away from home, and which, indeed, the Bulgarians had expressly pledged themselves to render in many matters. The German soldier,



with his keener insight, fought on the Macedonian front just as devotedly as he had done on the Western and Eastern fronts. He knew that even in the Balkan Peninsula he was defending his own home. Neither the Bulgarian people nor the Bulgarian Army were ripe for such a lofty view. They did not even grasp it when German troops were taken from the Macedonian front in an endeavor to force a decision elsewhere.

Even before the Rumanian storm-cloud broke the Bulgarian General Staff had decided to take the offensive in the direction of Salonika. This was quite a sound plan from a military point of view. Holding the line of the Struma, with one flank resting on the sea, the Bulgarian left wing would be considerably safer than in its positions along the frontier. The district east of the Struma was occupied on August 27 without serious fighting, as the Greek Fourth Army Corps, stationed there, offered no resistance and quietly looked on while the Bulgarian troops marched past. This corps remained in the neighborhood of Drama and Kavala. The German General Headquarters immediately ordered our liaison officer to take charge of these troops. They soon placed themselves at our disposal, and, with their own consent, were taken to Görlitz for internment there.

All danger to the rear of the Bulgarian Army had now been removed. Entente troops were on the line of the Struma. The Bulgarians did not advance any farther, as their main thrust *via* Florina had meanwhile failed. The Bulgarians had crossed the Greek frontier at this point on August 19, with the *massif* of the Malka Nidze, east of Florina, which was held by the Serbs, as their first objective. The lower slopes were carried by surprise, but the main attack was repulsed by a violent Serbian counter-attack. The Bulgarian losses were heavy. Their offensive and their spirit collapsed to-

gether. The King of Bulgaria and Radoslavoff, who were in Pless at the beginning of September, were full of laments and demanded German troops. Our Government strongly supported them in this, against our wishes, and also urged an abatement of Bulgaria's debt to Germany, a matter which I did not at that time fully realize, because it did not concern me.

It would have been contrary to sound conduct of the war to yield to Bulgaria's demand for German reinforcements. From the point of view of the war as a whole, more important matters were at stake in Transylvania. General Headquarters refused any assistance. I found that the communications between the valley of the Vardar and the plain of Monastir were in no way adequate to supply the needs of the troops which were already there. To send more troops there would have been bad policy. Once more we had, first of all, to put matters on a sound footing, even though the Bulgarians might have to surrender a little ground. They must accept the inevitable. We could not do everything with German troops. But General Headquarters gave as much help as the situation permitted. The German Army Headquarters was transferred from the Vardar to the right wing, with a view to securing correct tactical handling and the adoption of thorough measures for the establishment of rear communications. German railway troops and labor battalions had to take this work into their own expert hands. This mountainous country was exceedingly difficult, and it took many months to do what should have been done before the Florina offensive was undertaken.

General Jekoff was the Bulgarian Commander-in-chief. He was a loyal supporter of the Alliance, but did not possess those outstanding qualities which are required of a leader in a modern war. Besides, he

lacked the necessary training. His character was irreproachable, but he had not sufficient resolution to remedy various grave defects in the Bulgarian Army. He was entangled in narrow party politics and so forgot the war. His Chief of Staff at that time was Lukoff, a man of unsound judgment and an intriguer who is responsible for the misfortune of his country and the Quadruple Alliance.

I found it difficult to get a clear idea of the psychology of the Bulgarian people. They appeared to me to have strong national feeling and to be quite ready to fight for the position of First Power in the Balkans.

Radoslavoff was a Germanophile from inward conviction. He stood and fell by the Alliance. In putting forward demands on Germany and in his Greater-Bulgarian policy he was exceedingly obstinate and gave free rein to all agitation in that direction, so that he could play off the national wishes against us. But he forgot that in so doing he was making his own position very much more difficult for peace negotiations. He also did nothing to enlighten his people about the necessity of the war. Perhaps he did not fully realize it himself.

The King of Bulgaria was just as firm a supporter of the Alliance. He was an uncommonly clever man, but a lover of skilful diplomacy rather than a man of action. He liked to have several irons in the fire and thought he could always postpone decisions. Thanks to the great ability with which he managed the Bulgarians, this had been good enough for peace-time; but it was not enough in war. I was particularly sorry that he was no soldier, and therefore did not exercise that influence over the army which his high position demanded of him.

The Crown Prince Boris, excellently trained by his

father, was a thoroughly soldierly personality, and mature beyond his years. He had a clear understanding of military necessities. Our staffs in Bulgaria and I myself liked dealing with him. These people cannot find a better ruler.

## IV

The situation in Turkey had improved since the forces of the Entente evacuated the Gallipoli peninsula. It had now become possible for Enver Pasha to place some troops at the disposal of the German General Headquarters. He realized, quite rightly, that, as far as Turkey was concerned, the war would now be decided in other theaters.

Of course these troops had first of all to be trained, clothed, and equipped. That took time. At the end of July and the beginning of August the Turkish 15th Corps had been sent to Galicia, and now an Ottoman division was sent to the neighborhood of Warna. Enver took these troops from the army of Marshal Liman Pasha, to whom the defense of Constantinople and the coast of Asia Minor was still committed.

The English had driven the Turks out of the Sinai peninsula. They were now busy building a full-gage railway and a pipe-line; as soon as sufficient progress had been made with these works an enemy invasion of Palestine was to be anticipated.

The Turkish success at Kut-el-Amara had had no sequel. The English were preparing a new operation against Bagdad, and this time it looked as if it was to be carried right through. The resumption of active hostilities here was to be expected sooner or later.

Both operations were bound to succeed if the English really took their task in hand, as now appeared to be the case. But the stouter the Turkish resistance the

larger the force they would have to employ. For that reason the fighting value of the Turkish Army was a matter of the greatest importance to us. The stiffer the Turks' defense in Palestine and Mesopotamia, and the larger the force absorbed in the English effort to achieve their object, the more our burden in the West would be lightened. Of course in their Indian contingents the English had troops at their disposal which they did not care to use in France, so that their employment in Asiatic Turkey did not benefit our situation in the West. All the same, it increased the military demands upon the British.

The Turkish enterprises in Persia in the direction of Hamadan were merely episodes, and of no importance for the conduct of the war.

In eastern Asia Minor, west and south of the Trebizond-Erzinjan-Mush line, Russians and Turks stood facing one another, inactive. The strengths of both armies appeared to be extraordinarily low. I have never been able to find out exactly what the Turkish strength there was. We no longer anticipated any more great Russian offensives, because this theater presented too many difficulties for Russia, too.

The Turkish Army was exhausted. To begin with, it had not recovered from the Balkan War before it was involved in another. Its wastage from disease and in action was continuously high. The trustworthy, brave Anatolian had vanished from its ranks. The unreliable Arab auxiliaries were playing an increasingly important part everywhere, but especially in Mesopotamia and Palestine. The forces were now below their paper strength, and the men were badly fed and still worse equipped. The lack of efficient officers was particularly felt. Liman Pasha, relying on his authority, endeavored again and again to make his divisions into an efficient fighting instrument. He did

all that could be done. When Turkish troops left his hands to come under German leadership, in Galicia or against Rumania, for example, they behaved quite passably, and sometimes well, but where they were under a Turkish command they soon forgot what German thoroughness had taught them.

Besides money, Turkey received from us officers and technical units, as well as war material, though the amount of this was regulated by the very limited number of trains to Constantinople which were at our disposal. Liman Pasha's divisions could not be equipped here. The further transport of war material for the troops in Palestine and Mesopotamia or the Caucasus front was also so limited that these were only very poorly equipped. This reduced still further their fighting power, which was low enough already on account of their small numbers. We tried to increase the capacity of the Turkish railways by supplying material and technical personnel.

The Turkish Government preserved its attitude of hostility toward the other races.

In spite of my entreaties, Turkey made no serious attempt to break with her old policy toward the Arabs. In any case, perhaps it would have been too late. English gold did the rest. The Arabs turned more and more against the Turks. It was a miracle that Turkey was able to hold the Hedjaz Railway and Medina almost to the end of the war.

At the beginning of September Enver, too, came to Pless. He was a very gifted man and made a notable and unusual impression upon us. He was a true friend of Germany and there was a bond of warm sympathy between us. He had a real military instinct for the art of war, but he lacked both the knowledge of first principles and professional qualifications. Nor had he received a thorough training. His great military ability

had no chance to develop. His sending Turkish troops to Galicia and against the Rumanians proved his sound military judgment. On the other hand, he was always clamoring for war material on a scale that could not possibly be supplied. The majority of the available trains to Turkey *via* Sofia were used for coal, which was sent from Upper Silesia to Constantinople. Over and over again I begged Enver, the very distinguished Talaat, and other Turkish high officials, who visited us, to increase their home output of coal, which appeared perfectly possible. If they had there would have been more transport space for war material. I discussed with them the great importance of railways in warfare, and showed them how Turkey could help herself in this respect. I made little impression upon them and they certainly showed no disposition to accept my suggestions. They continued to assail me with their demands, although it was plain that no notice could be taken of them. Turkey did practically nothing to improve the working of her coal-mines and railways.

The Young Turks were firmly in power in Constantinople.

The people themselves held aloof.

When I took up my new duties the outlook in Turkey was far from reassuring. I could think only with apprehension of Mesopotamia and Palestine.

## V

Wherever personal discussion was impossible, liaison with our allies was assured by military representatives. The German General von Cramon was responsible for communication between ourselves and the Austro-Hungarian General Headquarters, and he fulfilled his often difficult task with extraordinary skill and great

personal tact. Thanks to him, our relations with the Austro-Hungarian General Headquarters became steadily more intimate. The Austro-Hungarian military representative at the German General Headquarters, Lieutenant Field-Marshal von Klepsch, kept more in the background. He was also an exceptionally gifted man, who contributed largely to avoidance of misunderstandings, and was always ready to work with us in the spirit of unshakable comradeship.

Our dealings with Bulgaria passed in the main through the hands of Colonel (late General) Gantschew, the Bulgarian representative at our headquarters. He was an uncommonly skilful and clever personality, who represented Bulgarian interests most efficiently, without losing the wider point of view. He was a loyal friend of the Alliance, and later, on the King's abdication, accompanied him to Germany. The German military representative in Sofia, Colonel von Massow, who stood very well with the King, was often called in to aid, and had continually to smooth away the difficulties to which the peculiar character of the Bulgarians so easily gave rise.

The Turkish military representative, Lieutenant-General Zeki Pasha, an Ottoman of high rank and a loyal friend of Germany, was a remarkably skilful and tactful upholder of his army's interests. The German representative in Constantinople, General von Lossow, was particularly well informed on Turkish subjects, and a personal friend of Enver Pasha. Naturally, we frequently had recourse to his services. As the Chief of Staff at the Turkish General Headquarters was a German—first, General Bronsart von Schellendorf, and subsequently General von Seeckt—relations with this body were naturally particularly intimate.

When the Field-Marshal and I arrived at Pless the question was just being mooted of the establishment of



a single command for the Quadruple Alliance in all tactical and strategical matters. I warmly advocated it and had the pleasure of seeing it carried out. The final decision lay with His Majesty, who gave permission to the Field-Marshal to do everything "By Order of His Majesty." In practice the actual control was limited; we had no definite knowledge of the quality of our allies' troops, and were thus unable, for example, to direct that only so many troops should be retained on Austria's Italian frontier. In practice we generally came to some mutual arrangement, but the directions issued by the German General Headquarters carried with them a certain authority which proved to be of great utility.

The Field-Marshal and I had, accordingly, the conduct of operations in the West, and in the East as far as the Dobrudja in the south. With regard to the Rumanian campaign, it was necessary to come to an arrangement with our allies, and in particular with Austria-Hungary. The Austro-Hungarian Headquarters Staff in Teschen had under its command the army group of the Archduke Charles and the troops that were now moving into Transylvania. They depended, however, so largely upon the measures we ourselves were about to take that the assumption of the single command by our General Headquarters made no difference whatever in fact.

The Italian and Albanian fronts were the exclusive sphere of General von Conrad.

Conditions in Macedonia, Bulgaria, and Turkey demanded our closest attention, but we could not have the final voice there.

One result of the establishment of the single command was that the general staffs of the various allies had recourse to us whenever disagreements broke out between them. In Balkan questions, the Bulgar

General Headquarters was very reluctant to have any direct dealing with Turkey or Austria-Hungary, while the latter, in its turn, preferred to deal with us rather than with Bulgaria.

## VI

His Majesty the Emperor was Supreme War Lord. In him resided the ultimate authority over the army and navy. The commanders-in-chief of the land and sea forces were responsible to him.

Subject to His Majesty's pleasure, the Chief of the General Staff of the field army had full control of the direction of operations. Decisions of the first importance required His Majesty's approval. He had no executive authority.

The Emperor was thus the head of the General Staff. I may mention that, when I use this latter expression in these memoirs in the narrower sense as referring to the General Staff of the army in the field, I do so in accordance with the current, though incorrect, practice.

The Chief of the Naval Staff, as the director of operations at sea, had the same status as the Chief of the General Staff in the field. As regards such operations he had the same rights and duties. The General Staff and the Naval Staff have always worked well together.

The Governors-General in Brussels and Warsaw were directly responsible to His Majesty and took their directions from the Chancellor in matters of policy. In military questions they took directions from General Headquarters—on one occasion it proved necessary to obtain an order from His Majesty when we wanted some horses from the Warsaw Government.

The other occupied territories fell under the administration of the Quartermaster-General, and thus under

General Headquarters. The real authorities in these areas were the army Headquarters Staffs.

The Ministries of War of Prussia, Bavaria, Saxony, and Württemberg ranked equal to ourselves. They had their representatives at General Headquarters, in the person of the military representatives of the separate contingents. The Bavarians were always changing their representative. Latterly General von Hartz, and after him General Köberle, held the position. Saxony and Württemberg were represented by Generals von Eulitz and von Graevenitz, the latter being afterward succeeded by Lieutenant-Colonel Holland. The other function of these officers was to uphold the interests of their own armies as against General Headquarters. It must be clear that not even in the German Army was jealousy wholly non-existent. If any difficulties arose in any part of the field, one national contingent was at times disposed to lay the blame on another. At one time there would be complaints of too heavy losses, at another of too little opportunity to shine. There were also personal questions to be settled with the military representatives. These officers co-operated well with General Headquarters. I think I must have convinced them that I attended to their interests in a disinterested spirit. I have never made any difference between the four contingents. They all did their duty and all had their good and less good divisions. Württemberg alone had only good ones. The Baden divisions deserve the same praise, although they did not form a separate contingent. In spite of the variety of the peoples composing it, the army held together well. It was only after a long period of nerve-racking toil that a certain spirit of hostility manifested itself between the Bavarians and the Prussians. And this never applied to officers of higher rank.

The Prussian War Ministry was represented by

Major Stieler von Heydekampf, who gave me devoted assistance in my many difficult tasks.

In many directions the War Ministries complied with our requests, and I found them loyal helpers. When, however, the exigencies of war began to affect the home life of the people more and more intimately the officials could not shake themselves free of home influences. They succumbed instead of rising superior to them, and thus failed to give the army that moral support it so urgently needed.

I had no dealings with the general officers commanding the home commands, except on questions of patriotic instruction. They were not under the orders of General Headquarters. Under the *Belagerungsgesetz*<sup>1</sup> they were absolutely independent, and after the creation by the Reichstag of a supreme military authority, in the autumn of 1916, they were made responsible to the War Ministers, as was already the case in Bavaria.

By this appointment the Prussian War Minister became of much more importance to the successful prosecution of the war. His responsibility was much greater, and he had now frankly to remind the Chancellor of his duty to strengthen the morale, in order that that of the army should not suffer. He had also to insist that order should be maintained at home from whatever quarter it was threatened. This was what the army expected of the Prussian War Minister. The attitude of the Government and the law creating a supreme military authority lowered the status of the general officers commanding the home commands. Indeed, it was the precise object of that law, which was aimed primarily at them and all their works. It is true that in the interpretation of the law relating to associations and in the application of the censorship, as well as in

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<sup>1</sup> Literally, the "Law of the Siege."

many other matters, it was a great disadvantage to have a multiplicity of authorities, and it must have led to considerable confusion. One single firm assertion of the Government's authority would have been far better. But this was wanting, and the War Minister did not succeed in supplying it. More and more, as the Chancellor yielded to party pressure, uncertainty and confusion spread from Berlin to the provinces. Independent action on the part of the general officers commanding the home commands became rarer and rarer. The law creating the supreme military authority, which might have done good, was ultimately fatal to us.

A further authority, with which General Headquarters had to deal as of equal status, was the Chief of the Military Cabinet, who was responsible to the Emperor alone. He worked well and conscientiously, forming his opinion simply on the reports of the staffs. He received my views also in the case of the general officers commanding armies and the home commands. Beyond this, General Headquarters had nothing to do with personal questions, save that it was morally responsible for officers of the General Staff, and also for the award of decorations. I should like to have seen at the head of the Military Cabinet men who had had real personal experience of the fighting, so that we could rely upon them to do justice to the Corps of Officers. As it was, this body worked too closely on the lines of its peace-time routine, and did not bring strong characters to the front.

In questions of decorations, too, the importance of which must not be underestimated, the Chief of the Military Cabinet had jurisdiction. Here, too, he relied upon the reports of the Army Headquarters staffs. Unfortunately, too long elapsed between the recommendation and the actual grant of decorations. It was

only after long and continuous pressure that General Headquarters managed to secure the grant of a "wounded" badge.

The conduct of the war in the colonies was in the hands of the Colonial Secretary. In peace-time he had not maintained close touch with the General Staff on the subject of the conduct of military operations in the colonies. In 1904 General Count von Schlieffen obtained the control of operations in Southwest Africa only by a special order. The Colonial Office had not paid sufficient attention to the defensive possibilities of the colonies. One cannot estimate too highly the benefits France has reaped from her colonies in the prosecution of the war. Especially in the summer of 1918 she carried on the fighting largely by means of colored troops. We could never, of course, have done this, but we might have reaped greater advantage from our colonial possessions. The band of German heroes in East Africa succeeded in drawing off powerful enemy forces, which thus could not be used against Turkey and had to be replaced to some extent by other troops, thus weakening the Western front in the long run. I followed the campaigns in the colonies with interest, and was surprised that Southwest Africa did not act with more energy. It should not have fallen so rapidly. I do not know the causes of its fall. The lack of attention of the home Government to questions of colonial defense cannot have been the sole reason. In East Africa, in the autumn of 1917, between the Rufiji and the Rovuma, and later, on Portuguese territory until the end of the war, General von Lettow-Vorbeck gave a magnificent proof of German courage in foreign parts.

General Headquarters and the Chancellor had equal status. Here, too, the common head was the Emperor. Our dealings with the Imperial Government were frequent and not too pleasant. We did not meet with

that spirit of accommodation which was so necessary when we told the authorities what the successful prosecution of the war demanded of them, if the German people were to be victorious.

The representation of military interests in all questions of foreign policy during the war and in connection with the conclusion of peace meant frequent dealings and much friction also.

The machinery of government in Berlin gave the impression of being extremely clumsy.

The various departments worked side by side without any real sympathy or cohesion, and there was infinite "overlapping." The left hand often did not know what the right was doing. A Bismarck could have made these departments co-operate properly, but the task was beyond our War Chancellors.

Relations between the General Staff and the Government were improved and simplified in February 1917 by the Chancellor appointing a personal representative at General Headquarters; at first this was Under-Secretary of State von Stein, who was like a breath of fresh air all the time he was with us. In the autumn of 1917 the position was taken by Count Limburg-Stirum, a skilful and well-informed man of great patriotism. Dealing with him was a real pleasure. In much the same way Colonel (later General) von Winterfeldt represented the General Staff at the Chancellor's department in Berlin. He worked at his difficult task with devotion and tact.

General Headquarters had further to deal with a whole series of imperial offices, and also, in questions of communications, with the governments of the larger states. I greatly missed the assistance of a strong imperial executive. The disadvantages of our complicated constitution were plainly evident. The desire for an Imperial Ministry of War was expressed to me

by several far-seeing Bavarian officers of high rank. I could only agree with them, and beg them to advocate that view in Bavaria.

The question of unifying the constitution of Germany is now under discussion, and I trust that it may be achieved as a further step in the development of our country. It must not be forgotten, in any such changes, what Germany owes to Prussia and to the other states.

The military *attachés* in neutral states were at the disposal of General Headquarters, as in peace-time. They were subject to the ambassadors and did no political work. They reported any military matters direct to the General Staff, a copy of their report being supplied to the ambassador. This method of working did not give rise to difficulties. The *attachés* also worked on propaganda in agreement with the ambassador. In this branch of their activities they received their instructions from Colonel von Haeften.

In the allied countries our military *attachés* had similar tasks. Here, too, they had nothing to do with politics. Their most important duty was to act as liaison officers between our General Headquarters and the general staffs of the allied armies.

## VII

On September 5 the Field-Marshal and I paid our first visit to the West. We traveled *via* Charleville, where General Headquarters had been established hitherto, to Cambrai, the headquarters of the Crown Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria.

The Crown Prince came to meet us on our way into Charleville. A company of the famous Von Rohr Storm Battalion formed the guard of honor for the Field-Marshal. For the first time I saw a single de-



tachment in full storming rig-out, with the steel helmets which had proved so extraordinarily, so wonderfully, useful. We had not had them in the East. The Crown Prince was greatly pleased at the abandonment of the attacks on Verdun, a course he had long and earnestly desired. He discussed other matters also, and mentioned to me his desire for peace; he did not explain how this was to be obtained from the Entente.

In Charleville the Field-Marshal saw the officers of Main Headquarters. The division of General Headquarters into two groups, and the immense distance between Pless and Charleville, had proved very inconvenient in every way. The excellent telephone and telegraph service was no substitute for personal discussion. I would have preferred to have General Headquarters entirely in the West, although not at Charleville, which was not a convenient place. The German troops in France and Belgium had to bear the burden of the war in its most merciless form, and one's anxiety to be geographically near them was natural enough. General Headquarters was, however, compelled to remain at Pless, as the operations in Rumania required that we should keep in close touch with General von Conrad in Teschen. General Headquarters was, therefore, moved to the East, and established in Pless, Kattowitz, and other towns.

The conference in Cambrai took place on the morning of the 7th, while a violent struggle was proceeding on the Somme. We were all deeply affected by that terrible conflict.

The Western front was not at this time well organized. The constitution of the armies into army groups had not been carried far enough yet. The army group of Crown Prince Rupprecht had been created as a result of the August Somme fighting. It included the Sixth Army before Arras, which the

Crown Prince himself had thitherto commanded, and the two other armies also engaged, the First and Second, under Generals Fritz von Below and von Gallwitz. The army group of the German Crown Prince was of earlier origin; it consisted of the Third Army near Rheims, the Fifth at Verdun, led by the Crown Prince himself, and the army detachments A and B in Alsace and Lorraine.

Not forming part of any army group was the Fourth Army, under Field-Marshal Duke Albrecht of Württemberg, on the right wing of the army, and the Seventh Army, under Colonel-General von Schubert, between the two army groups. At first we decided to make no change in these arrangements beyond putting the Seventh Army into the Crown Prince Rupprecht's group, and shortly afterward forming a special army group under the German Crown Prince. There were now only three great sections, taking orders direct from General Headquarters. The wholesale reorganization of the West front could not be undertaken until there was a pause in the fighting.

The Chief of Staff of the Fourth Army, General Ilse, and Generals von Kuhl and von Lüttwitz, the chiefs of staff to the Crown Prince Rupprecht and the German Crown Prince's groups, gave us a summary of events on their sectors. Colonel von Lossberg in his serious way, and Colonel Bronsart von Schellendorf with his usual vivacity, supplemented General von Kuhl's report of the battle of the Somme with more detailed and intimate descriptions of events. The loss of ground up to date appeared to me of little importance in itself. We could stand that, but the question how this and the progressive falling off of our fighting power of which it was symptomatic was to be prevented was of immense importance. It was just as necessary to have a clear idea of our fighting capacity as to know

whether our tactical views were still sound. The first was an easy matter, the second of extreme difficulty. Opinions vary as much in strategical and tactical as in political and economic questions. It is just as difficult to carry conviction. The symptoms are recognized, but the underlying causes are the subject of controversy. In such circumstances a cure is a difficult matter. The army is a very conservative body. It was so in peace-time and war made no difference.

My mental picture of the fighting at Verdun and on the Somme had to be painted a shade darker in view of what I had just heard. The only relief in it was the heroism of our German men, who had suffered to the extreme limit of human endurance for the sake of the Fatherland. I cannot repeat all the moving stories of the battle which I heard. The finest description of the battle has been written by a young officer of the doughty Hamburg Regiment—it is an epic in prose.

I began to realize what a task the Field-Marshal and I had undertaken in our new spheres, and what a burden we should lay on the leaders and troops in the West if we drew on them still further for our offensive in the Southeast.

On the Somme the enemy's powerful artillery, assisted by excellent aeroplane observation and fed with enormous supplies of ammunition, had kept down our own fire and destroyed our artillery. The defense of our infantry had become so flabby that the massed attacks of the enemy always succeeded. Not only did our morale suffer, but, in addition to fearful wastage in killed and wounded, we lost a large number of prisoners and much material.

The most pressing demands of these officers were for an increase of artillery, ammunition, aircraft, and balloons, as well as larger and more punctual allotment of fresh divisions and other troops to make possible

a better system of reliefs. The breaking off of the attack on Verdun made it easier to satisfy their wishes, but even there we had to reckon in the future with considerable wastage, if only on account of the local conditions. It was possible that the French would themselves make an attack from the fortress. Verdun remained an open, wasting sore.

It would have been better to withdraw our positions out of the crater area. At that time I had not a thorough grasp of the local difficulties of the Verdun fighting. After the Somme, the fortress still required the most consideration, but in spite of that the Fifth Army would have to surrender a considerable amount of artillery and aircraft. The other armies would have to be dealt with still more ruthlessly. They would have to hold longer fronts and release divisions, artillery, aircraft, and balloons for the battle-front. Weak spots would naturally result; but we should have to put up with this if we intended to hold on the Somme. That was imperative, as no rear lines had been prepared. General Headquarters could at last count on a few new divisions, which were gradually got ready.

Conditions on the battle-front as regards artillery and air strength were bound gradually to improve as the more rapid reinforcement recently introduced began to have effect; only the question of munitions gave cause for anxiety, although I had already drawn heavily on other fronts.

It appeared possible, thanks to this better supply of divisions, that Rupprecht's army group would gradually be relieved of the necessity of living from hand to mouth. It was then to be hoped that a proper system of putting in and taking out of divisions in sequence would result. I had to attach the greatest importance to this, in consideration of the internal organization of the army and in the interests of the men, as supply,

both for men and horses, was suffering. After General Headquarters had given help in the matter, I firmly insisted that units should not be mixed up. Until then this had not been possible, owing to force of circumstances. This special arrangement did not get rid of the necessity of continually relieving worn-out divisions by others. A very essential, and, indeed, difficult and responsible, task of my Operations Department was to have divisions always ready which could immediately be made available for the Somme battle. The condition of the troops had to be accurately gaged so that we could arrange for their removal from a quiet front for service on more or less important sectors of the battle-line.

The reinforcements which were released for the battle could not be sent up to the front line in rotation. The railways were already considerably overtaxed by the ordinary traffic to and from the battle-lines. An enormous number of additional trains had to be run. Two or three weeks had to pass before full effect could be given to this new arrangement. In that time all our calculations might be upset by enemy successes and new demands might have to be met. That lay in the hands of fate, not to mention the enemy. For the moment everything had been done which the stress of circumstances made at all possible.

In the province of tactics it was necessary to restore the supremacy of the aggressive function of the artillery in locating and destroying the enemy's guns and infantry before the infantry attack was launched. We had previously had to renounce this on account of our inferiority in guns and ammunition. The barrage had come to be regarded as a universal panacea. The infantry insisted on it, but, unfortunately, it had come to confuse many sound theories. A barrage is all very well in theory, but in practice only too often it collapses

under the storm of the enemy's "destruction fire." Our infantry, which had come to rely on the barrage alone for protection, was far too inclined to forget that it had to defend itself by its personal efforts.

The increase in the number of the guns and the amount of ammunition required (first essentials for an effective use of artillery) had to go hand in hand with a more resolute handling of the artillery action by the corps staffs and by better shooting by means of aerial observation. I and many other officers advocated that the artillery action should in general be directed by divisions in conformity with precise orders from superior authority. This view met, of course, with opposition; it gradually came to be recognized as the only sound one. Every divisional commander was to have a special high artillery officer for the direction and control of this arm. The want of some such arrangement had made itself felt very deeply.

Artillery and aircraft were to co-operate more closely. The airman would have to develop a liking for artillery-ranging work. A battle high up in the air, with a chance of high honors and a mention in *Army Orders*, was decidedly more exciting and wonderful than ranging for the artillery. Comprehension of the great importance of artillery-ranging work was only gradually inculcated.

As a fighting instrument for use against ground targets, aeroplanes did not then play such a systematic rôle as they did in 1917 and more particularly in 1918; but as early as the battle of the Somme the enemy's aircraft, descending very low, played havoc with our infantry by machine gun fire, not so much by causing heavy casualties as by making the troops feel that they had been discovered in places which heretofore they had thought afforded safe cover. This feeling of apprehension was so strong at first that rifles and machine

guns were often not put to that use for which they would have been most effective.

In the end of ends, infantry is the deciding factor in every battle. I was in the infantry myself and was body and soul an infantryman. I told my sons to join the infantry. They did so, but, as happened to so many of our young men, the freedom of the air drew them from the trenches. But the fine saying of the old *Directions for Infantry Exercise* will always remain true in war, "The infantry bears the heaviest burden of a battle and requires the greatest sacrifice; so also it promises the greatest renown."

Heavy indeed is the burden of the infantry in this as in other wars. It has to endure the heaviest bombardments of the enemy, lying quietly in dirt and mud, in damp and cold, hungry and thirsty, or huddled in dugouts, holes, and cellars; it must await the overpowering assault, until, leaving the safety of its shelters, face to face with death, it must rise to meet the destroying storm. Such is its life. It can be endured only when discipline has prepared the way and when a deep love of the Fatherland and an imperative sense of duty fill the heart. The glory is great. But the highest reward lies in the proud consciousness of having served the Fatherland more than all others, and in the sense that one's own courage has wrung victory out of the battle. Those who have stayed at home cannot picture it to themselves too often. Before such heroism they must bow the head in silence and not talk.

In appraising achievements, equal justice must be done to all those who fought like the infantry; the pioneers, the dismounted cavalryman, the field-telegraphist have equal glory. To all of them the same fine sentence in the *Training Regulations* applies.

In speaking thus I do not wish to belittle what the other branches of the service accomplished. They all

had the same appreciation and care from General Headquarters. The airman, too, shares the feeling of victory, the deep satisfaction of knowing that even in the air a man has his worth. But he was not subject to the disintegrating influences of battle.

The artillery had to endure the same strain as the infantry. The longer the war lasted the higher its losses became, in defense as in attack. It became increasingly clear that they were the keystone of the battle and the mainstay of the front.

All the same, the artillery need not fight with the infantry over that sentence in the *Regulations*. The artillery would certainly be right if it contested the suggestion that the infantry is the Queen of Arms. It was by some error that this statement had found its way into an artillery training-manual. There is no Queen of Arms. They all have equal right to the title, for all are equally necessary. It is impossible to get on without one of them.

I attached great significance to what I learned about our infantry at Cambrai, about its tactics and preparation. Without doubt it fought too doggedly, clinging too resolutely to the mere holding of ground, with the result that the losses were heavy. The deep dugouts and cellars often became fatal man-traps. The use of the rifle was being forgotten, hand grenades had become the chief weapons, and the equipment of the infantry with machine guns and similar weapons had fallen far behind that of the enemy. The General Field-Marshal and I could for the moment only ask that the front lines should be held more lightly, the deep underground works be destroyed, and all trenches and posts be given up if the retention of them were unnecessary to the maintenance of the position as a whole, and likely to be the cause of heavy losses. The problems of the reorganization and equipment of the



infantry could be dealt with only step by step. The excessive use of hand grenades had come about because these could be usefully and safely employed from behind shelter, whereas a man using a rifle must leave his cover. In the close fighting of some of our own undertakings, and also in the large-scale attacks by the enemy where the fighting at any moment came to be man to man, hand grenades were readier weapons for unpractised men and easier to use than rifles, the latter also having the disadvantage of getting dirty easily. One could understand that; but the infantry must be prepared to hold the enemy off and to fight from a distance. When it came to hand-to-hand fighting the superiority of the enemy in men was much too great.

The infantry soldier had forgotten his shooting through use of grenades. He had to relearn it. He had to reacquire confidence in his weapon, and that meant that he must become master of it. That was easier to advise than to get accomplished. In the short training given to our new drafts little could be accomplished even if the attempt were made. Complete training was possible only under the conditions of peace, if the use of the rifle were to be a real protection when war came.

In the case of the hostile infantry, the strength of the men had been greatly increased by machine guns; we, on the other hand, had still to rely chiefly on our men. We had every reason to be sparing of them. An important change, moreover, had occurred; the machine gun had to become chief firing weapon of the infantry. The companies must be provided with new light machine guns, the serving of which must be done by the smallest possible number of men. Our existing machine guns in the machine gun sections were too heavy for the purpose.

In order to strengthen our fire, at least in the most

important parts of the chief theater of war, it was necessary to create special machine gun companies—so to speak, machine gun sharpshooters. Already a beginning had been made; it was necessary to consolidate and to increase it.

The fighting power of the infantry had to be further strengthened by trench-mortars and bomb-throwers. The supply of all quick-loading weapons had to be increased.

Lastly, the formation of storm troops from the infantry, which had begun during the war, had not only to be regularized, but to be adapted to the common good. The instruction formations and the storm battalions had proved their high value both intrinsically and for the improvement of the infantry generally. They were examples to be imitated by the other men. But for this it was necessary to have a training-manual prepared, and this had not yet been done.

The course of the Somme battle had also supplied important lessons with respect to the construction and plan of our lines. The very deep underground forts in the front trenches had to be replaced by shallower constructions. Concrete "pill-boxes," which, however, unfortunately, took long to build, had acquired an increasing value. The conspicuous lines of trenches, which appeared as sharp lines on every aerial photograph, supplied far too good a target for the enemy artillery. The whole system of defense had to be made broader and looser and better adapted to the ground. The large, thick barriers of wire, pleasant as they were when there was little doing, were no longer a protection. They withered under the enemy barrage. Light strands of wire, difficult to see, were much more useful. Forward infantry positions with a wide field of fire were easily seen by the enemy. They could be destroyed by the artillery of the enemy, and were very difficult to

protect by our own artillery. Positions farther back, with a narrower firing field and more under the protection of our own guns, were retained. They were of special service in big fights.

The decisive value of the artillery observation and the consequent necessity of paying great attention to the selection of positions had also become apparent.

Here also there was much to be done; so much had changed, so much become completely transformed.

At the conference in Cambrai these various matters were merely touched upon. I got no more than general impressions, but these were enough to show the necessity of altering the plan of fighting and of improving the army in tactics and in equipment. On the Eastern front we had for the most part adhered to the old tactical methods and the old training which we had learned in the days of peace. Here we met with new conditions, and it was my duty to adapt myself to them.

I have always been interested in questions of tactics and armament, apart from the fact that these subjects formed part of my work in the Great General Staff at Berlin. Even at that time I had advocated many changes which had now become of the utmost importance. As could clearly have been foreseen, these subjects had now become questions of life or death to the army on the battle-fields, and they could not receive too much attention. My responsibility to the army in this matter weighed particularly heavy on me. If, on the one hand, I had perforce to demand the sacrifice of human lives, on the other hand, I had the nobler task, from the point of view of humanity, of doing all I could to save German lives.

All this impelled me to look more closely into the question of body armor. We did, indeed, give some out to the troops, but it was never popular, as the men found it too heavy.

Our conference at Cambrai had proved profitable. The quiet dignity of the assembled army commanders and chiefs of staff who had now for close on two years been engaged in great defensive battles in the West, while the Field-Marshal and I had been winning battles in bold offensive in the East, made a deep impression upon me. I was strengthened in my determination to make the Government put into the war what war requires. Men, war material, and moral resolution were matters of life and death to the army. The longer the war lasted the more urgent they became. The more the army demanded the more the country would have to find and the greater would be the task before the Imperial Government, and especially the Prussian War Ministry.

After the conference, we dined with the Crown Prince of Bavaria. It was only his sense of duty that made him a soldier; his inclinations were not military. Nevertheless, he entered upon his high military position and applied himself to the work it entailed with great devotion, and, supported by his excellent chiefs of staff, the Bavarian General Krafft von Dellmensingen at the beginning of the war, and now General von Kuhl—met all the great demands made on a Commander-in-chief. He, like the German Crown Prince, was in favor of ending the war without victory either side, but he had no idea whether the Entente would agree to this. My relations with the Crown Prince of Bavaria were always pleasant.

Duke Albrecht of Württemberg, Commander-in-chief of the Fourth Army, who was also present, was of a more pronounced soldierly temperament than the two Crown Princes. I seldom had the pleasure of meeting him, and have particularly pleasant recollections of the stimulating conversation I had with him. He was a real personality

In the afternoon we left Cambrai on our return journey through Belgium. Governor-General von Bissing accompanied us part of the way. We arranged with him that the Army of Occupation in Belgium was to be reduced, as, if units were to hold longer fronts in various parts of the Western front in the near future, it was advisable that Landsturm formations should be put into line here and there. We also asked for his help in the execution of our plans for the supply of war material.

On my way next afternoon I discussed this matter with Herr Duisburg and Herr Krupp von Bohlen and Halbach, whom I had asked to join the train. They considered it quite possible, in view of our stocks of raw material, to increase our output of war material if only the labor problem could be solved.

Early on the 9th we were back again in Pless. I was now at home in my position and understood my sphere of work. It was an enormous field of labor that suddenly opened itself before me, and many things were expected of me with which I had hitherto had nothing to do. Not only had I to probe deeply into the inner workings of the war-program and get a grasp of both great and small matters that affected the home life of the people, but I had to familiarize myself with great world questions that raised all sorts of problems.

Our old offices—in one of the Knight's Houses of the Prince's castle—were now too small for us. Fresh ones were taken in the administrative buildings of the principality of Pless. We ourselves occupied the house of Herr Nasse, the estate agent of the Prince of Pless. Regular work now began.

## VIII

As was to be expected, the Entente's offensive was continued throughout September and October, and even

later, with unremitting vigor. September was an especially critical month. It was not made easy for us to embark on an operation in Transylvania against Rumania.

The battle of the Somme, which had started on July 1 with an attempt at a break-through on a large scale, had been continued throughout July with the same intention and in the same strength. With the immediate object of wearing down our resistance the Entente had continued to launch big attacks in great strength on all parts of the battle-front. After Rumania's declaration of war these attacks were renewed with fresh vigor, and the Entente returned to its plan of a regular break-through. The battles that were then fought are among the most fiercely contested of the whole war, and far exceeded all previous offensives as regards the number of men and the amount of material employed. North of the Somme, the attack was resumed as early as September 3 and lasted until the 7th. The enemy penetrated into our positions more and more deeply. On September 5, south of the Somme, the French also attacked on a wide front, and gained ground at several points.

On the northern bank fighting began again on the 9th and lasted until the 17th. We were thrown back still farther. Ginchy and Bouchavesnes fell into the enemy's hands. The 17th was a day of heavy fighting on the southern bank; we lost Berny and Deniécourt. South of the Somme the fighting was somewhat less fierce, though the hostile artillery fire was kept up. North of the Somme fighting ceased; but the 25th saw the beginning of the heaviest of the many heavy engagements that made up the battle of the Somme. Great were our losses. The enemy took Rancourt, Morval, Geudecourt, and the hotly contested Combles. On the 26th the Thiépval salient fell. Further enemy attacks on the 28th miscarried.



FIG. 10. BATTLE OF THE SOMME, 1916

The fighting had made the most extraordinary demands both upon commanders and troops. The relief arrangements inaugurated at Cambrai, and the new system of reserves projected for the Western front, no longer sufficed. Divisions and other formations had to be thrown in on the Somme front in quicker succession and had to stay in the line longer. The time for recuperation and training on quiet sectors became shorter and shorter. The troops were getting exhausted. Everything was cut as fine as possible. The strain on our nerves in Pless was terrible; over and over again we had to find and adopt new expedients. It needed the iron nerves of Generals von Gallwitz, Fritz von Below, von Kuhl, Colonels von Lossberg and Bronsart von Schellendorf, to keep them from losing their heads, systematically to put in the reserves as they came up, and, in spite of all our failures, eventually to succeed in saving the situation. Above all, it needed troops like the Germans!

In October the attacks continued in undiminished force, especially on the northern part of the front. The enemy brought up even more men and material. We sustained losses, yet an effective stiffening of our defense began to be perceptible.

The struggle continued in the shell-hole area on the northeastern front of Verdun. The French were pushing forward and we remained on the defensive. The troops were very exhausted. But there was no change in the general situation there.

On the Italian front, between September 14 and 17, the seventh Isonzo offensive of the Italian armies, and the eighth, from October 9-13, had been beaten off by Austria-Hungary. A further attack was to be expected.

On the Macedonian front the Entente had embarked on a counter-offensive during the latter half of Septem-



ber, west of Lake Ostrovo in the direction of Florina, and had pushed the Bulgarians back to the positions they had held in August. I had hoped that they would find prepared positions there, but I soon learned quite another story from the staff of the Eleventh Army, which had taken over command there. The Bulgarians had done nothing. The position was, of course, serious, and Colonel Gantschew complained bitterly of the bad impression the fall of Monastir would make on his Bulgarians. But he did not care to think of the far worse impression his Bulgarians made on us. At the moment we could do nothing for them. But I had come round to the view that we should have to get a firmer control of the Bulgarian Army, and to this end I proposed the formation of a special army group under German command, but to be subject to the Bulgarian High Command. This suggestion met with approval. Gen. Otto von Below, with his Chief of Staff, General von Böckmann, left Courland and took over the command of the new army group in Uskub.

During the first half of October the position of the Bulgarian troops on the Macedonian plain was grave.

On the Eastern front, General Headquarters attempted first of all to convey German troops to the Maros sector in order to give the weak Austro-Hungarian defense a certain stiffening. That was our first task. Next, a clear understanding had to be arrived at regarding the direction of operations against Rumania, and new arrangements had to be made north of the Carpathians. As General von Conrad insisted on Austro-Hungarian command in Transylvania, a new army group was formed in Hungary, under the Archduke Charles. He retained General von Seeckt as his Chief of Staff.

The Archduke's former army group, with the excep-

tion of the troops in the Carpathians, was placed under General von Boehm-Ermolli, who retained his command of the Second Austrian Army. The group so formed was placed under the command of the Commander-in-chief of the East. North of the Carpathians we had got at last what we had been struggling for so long—definite organization of command, which would meet the requirements of the situation. This had now become urgently necessary. The very exhausted German divisions of General Count von Bothmer's army, which the Russians had been attacking violently for so long, needed to be relieved by those divisions from the old front of the Commander-in-chief in the East on which less heavy demands had been made. The work of carrying out the relief meant a very tedious business, as it could only be done train for train. Our forces everywhere were so weak that, in view of the critical situation, whole divisions could not be taken at once from any one place. This was impossible in any case, as the Commander-in-chief in the East had continually to release more and more troops for Rumania.

Archduke Charles's new army group comprised troops in the Carpathians, which were formed into the Austrian Seventh Army, and the two armies to be formed in Transylvania. The northern one, the First Austrian Army, under General von Arz, was to be deployed on both sides of Maros Vasarhely as far back as Klausenburg, and the southern, the German Ninth Army, under General von Falkenhayn, between Karlsburg and Mühlbach, with small detachments farther south as far as Orsova. In this most important sector General von Falkenhayn had an opportunity of giving practical proof of his military ability as a leader of troops in the service of his country.

At the end of August and the beginning of September, in East Galicia and the Carpathians, the Russians were

putting heavy pressure upon what was then the army group of the Archduke Charles. The result was the gradual withdrawal of General Count von Bothmer's army from the Zlota Lipa behind the Narajovka, and a further loss of ground by the Austrian troops in the Carpathians, particularly near the Tartar Pass and on the frontier of the Bukovina. As the security of this front was a vital necessity for any operation against the Rumanian army in Transylvania, there was nothing for it but to send at least three divisions, which were on their way from the hard-pressed Western front to Transylvania, to Boehm-Ermolli, and the Archduke Charles's army groups on the Dniester and in the Carpathians. I agreed to this with a heavy heart. I remember the bitter feelings which surged up within me against the Austrian Army at the thought of our difficult position in the West and the East, and the tasks our troops were called upon to perform on all fronts. But there was no help for it. Our interests were mutual in the matter.

After further wavering, our front against the Russians' front was stabilized by the middle of September. In spite of a prodigious expenditure of men, further violent attacks west of Lutsk, on the Saturtzky-Pustomity line, the Graberka sector west of Brody and the heights of Zborow, as well as Brzeszany and our positions on the Narajovka, were all without result. Nor were the Russians able to boast of any notable gains in the fighting in the Carpathians for the Tartar Pass and the crest southeast to Kirlibaba, thanks to the admirable bearing of the German troops. Still, the position about the middle of October was by no means secure, nor was the Russian power of offense in any way broken. Their massed attacks continued with the same courage, and where this failed the troops were urged on from behind by machine guns. The

determination to obtain a victory in Wolhynia, East Galicia, and in the Carpathians, was still the driving force at the Russian Headquarters.

The deployment on the Maros was not complete until the end of September. A rapid advance on the part of the Rumanians would have utterly upset it. The Rumanian Army moved forward at a snail's pace, partly because its attention had been diverted by Field-Marshal von Mackensen's great successes in his invasion of the Dobrudja and partly because it was waiting for the Russians to cross the Carpathians. Its left wing remained between Orsova and Hermannstadt, where there was a rather stronger concentration. The bulk of the army was debouching from Kronstadt and the frontier mountains of Moldavia on an east-and-west line in close touch with the Russian left wing.

It appears to have been the intention of the Russians and Rumanians to descend into the Hungarian plain on a continuous line between the Carpathians and the Danube. But if this were to be accomplished, very strong Russian forces would have to be brought through the Carpathians. The Rumanians were to open the Carpathian passes for the Russians from the rear by a vigorous irruption into our concentration area. They did the opposite. Unaccustomed to war on a large scale, they made no use of the chances offered them again and again of forcing our divisions up against the Dniester and the Carpathians. They advanced in an extraordinarily slow manner and lost time. Every day was a day gained to us. The Russians, too, showed no capacity. They preferred to storm the ridge of the Carpathians instead of making a thrust at our open flank through Moldavia. Rumania's participation in the whole campaign followed no definite plan. No common scheme of operations had been settled upon.

After the first German troops from the West, which

had been intended for Rumania, had been moved to East Galicia and the Carpathians, we had to transfer to Transylvania divisions from the front of the Commander-in-chief in the East. We had to take the risk of weakening the front there. But the appearance of these troops in Transylvania could not be counted on before the middle of September. The poor railway communications in Hungary caused still further delay.

The Austrian troops, too, were long in coming up. General von Conrad did not dare to weaken the Isonzo front any further. He let us have only some mountain brigades from the Tyrol. Even these, too, could not be on the spot until very late. I therefore offered the Austrian General Headquarters in Teschen several Austrian divisions of Von Linsingen's group, which could no longer be employed against Russian troops. They were thankfully received. These divisions could hold part of the line, but certainly could hardly be used for attack.

In the second half of September the forces which we were concentrating in Transylvania gradually increased in numbers, though they were still very weak in comparison with the enemy. At the best, it was all a question of a few divisions. The Austrian First Army had little fighting value. The Ninth Army was capable of an offensive, and it was the center of gravity of the whole operation.

As soon as their concentration was completed, about the end of September, both armies were to start off, the Austrian First Army passing north of Schässburg, in a direction due east, and the bulk of the Ninth Army making for a line from Hermannstadt to Kronstadt. The Rumanians were to be attacked and thrust back toward the east. In executing this movement, the Ninth Army was to keep its right wing close to the north side of the Transylvanian Alps, so as to cut off

the Rumanian Army in Transylvania from its communications with Wallachia. The operation automatically secured the right flank of the army.

The three divisions of the Ninth Army concentrating around Mühlbach could be enveloped from the region of Petroseny through the Vulcan and Szurdok Passes, if the Rumanians decided to force their way past Hermannstadt and northward over the Maros. This possibility was to be dealt with first. It was important that we should throw back the Rumanians near Petroseny over the mountain ridge. The first German troops that came up were successful in doing so on September 19. When these had been brought back to join in the forward movement from Mühlbach to Hermannstadt, Austrian troops took over the defense of the passes. The Rumanians succeeded in recovering them on the 25th, but by then they had lost some of their importance.

In front of the First Army the Rumanians had pushed their way into the Görgeny Mountains in the bend of the upper Maros, and had driven in the Austrian posts on the Maros above Maros-Vasarhely. Farther south they had reached the neighborhood of Szekely-Udvarhely and east of Fogaras. The Hermannstadt group, two or three divisions strong, had not moved. Weak Austrian troops, stiffened by the Transylvanian Cavalry Brigade, which had been formed out of three cavalry regiments specially for this purpose, were holding a thin line between Schässburg and Hermannstadt.

The operations were to begin with a shattering blow at the Hermannstadt group by General von Falkenhayn. The exit from the Rotenturm Pass was to be closed, and both armies were to strike eastward.

The Hermannstadt blow succeeded. By September 26 the Alpine Corps, in a long flanking march, had pushed forward to the Rotenturm Pass in the rear.

of the enemy, whereupon the main body of the Ninth Army attacked on both sides of Hermannstadt. Our force was weak, and the battle lasted until the 30th. The Rumanians offered an obstinate resistance, and also attacked the Alpine Corps from the south. How-

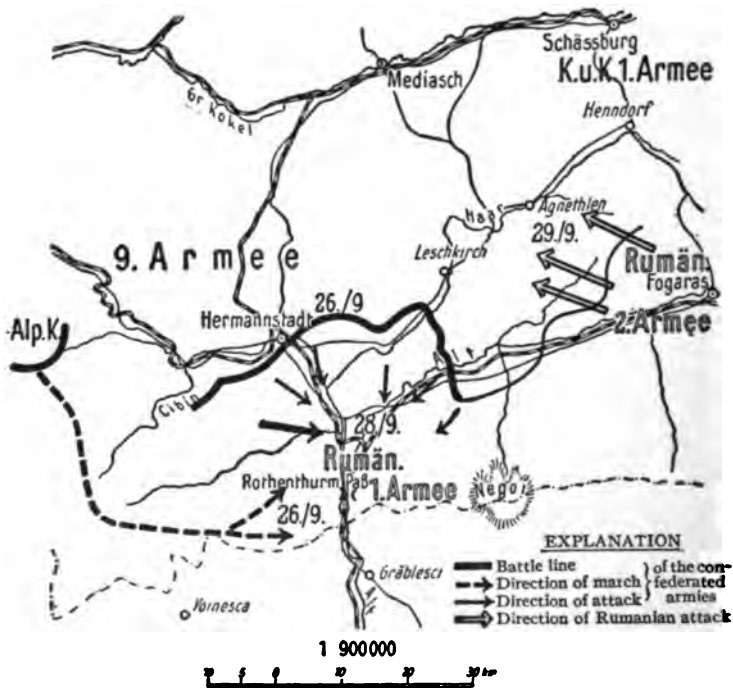


FIG. 11. HERMANNSTADT, 1916.

ever, the Rumanian main forces moved too late, and could not prevent the complete overthrow of a part of their army at Hermannstadt.

The Alpine Corps, reinforced by Austrian mountain formations which were now arriving, took over the duty of covering the right flank of the army at the

Rotenturm Pass. General von Falkenhayn himself immediately started his army on its eastward march, keeping to the north of the mountain ridge. To add to the pressure here, the 89th German Division of the First Army was pushed forward past and to the west of Schässburg, to join the Ninth Army. General von Arz started off simultaneously. The opposing armies were thus converging on one another.

At the outset the Rumanians were able to record a success in the center. They were, however, beaten by the Ninth Army south of Fogaras, and in a brilliant pursuit, lasting to October 10, were thrown back through the Geister-Wald and Kronstadt to Kimpolung, Sinaia, and Buzau in the mountains south of Kronstadt. The pressure which the Ninth Army thus brought to bear was so strong that the Rumanians farther north also began to retreat, and the Austrian First Army was enabled gradually to ascend from the region in which the Aluta and Maros rise, to the frontier mountains of Moldavia.

Meanwhile the attack of Field-Marshal von Mackensen against the Rumanians had resulted in a brilliant success. While a weak force marched along the Dobrudja Railway on Dobric, the Field-Marshal, with the rest of his army, attacked the fortress of Turtukai in the early days of September. Thanks to the decisive help of Bode's weak German detachment, the result was amazing. After a slight resistance, the best part of two Rumanian divisions surrendered on September 6. Silistria was rushed on the 9th. Dobric had already been taken on the 4th. It was not possible to press forward beyond this place, as the Rumanian troops here were very quickly reinforced by a Russian division and a division composed of Austro-Hungarian prisoners of war.

There was a certain apprehension in Sofia as to how



the Bulgarian troops would behave against the Russians, but this proved unfounded. The Bulgarians



FIG. 12. BATTLES IN THE DOBRUDJA, AUTUMN 1916

made no distinction between the Russians and the Rumanians. Unfortunately their capacity for attack

or maneuver was not great. The Third Bulgarian Army gave the German command much trouble at times.

Field-Marshal von Mackensen kept his left wing close to the Danube, and exerted his chief pressure at this point. The enemy forces which were assembling on the Kara Omer—ten kilometers northeast of Dobric-Lake Oltina line—were to be pinned against the Black Sea. Bode's German detachment, which was on the left wing, broke through this position in one great rush, and pressed onward down the Danube. The Bulgarians, however, were not quick enough. They attacked, it is true, but the enemy withdrew on September 15 in an orderly manner. The Third Bulgarian Army had let slip the chance of a great success. The enemy managed to take up the new line Rasova-Cobadinu-Tuzla, which had been fortified before the war began.

Attempts to take this position as well had soon to be abandoned. The strength of the Bulgarian-Turkish troops at hand at the time was insufficient. Communications had to be restored and extended, so that the necessary ammunition could be brought up for the attack. All this took time.

Field-Marshal von Mackensen begged, as early as the latter half of September, for a German division; he could not carry out the attack without it. But the decision whether or not this request could be granted had to stand over for the time being.

While preparations for the resumption of the attack were in full swing, we were suddenly surprised on October 1 by news from Sofia that the Rumanians had crossed the Danube near Rahovo, northeast of Rustchuk, in strength. The forces watching the Danube were weak; there were no other troops handy. Field-Marshal von Mackensen threw against them

everything he could scrape together, and by October 3 the Rumanians were compelled to retire again to the north bank of the Danube. The Austrian Danube flotilla had co-operated effectively. What the Rumanian High Command really intended to achieve by this enterprise has never been made clear; it certainly could not affect the course of events in Transylvania and the Dobrudja.

By the middle of October the general situation had improved. On the Western front it remained grave in the highest degree, but the crisis had been overcome by the strenuous efforts of the troops there.

On the Italian front two strong enemy attacks had been beaten off.

In Macedonia a reverse was still to be feared.

The Rumanian Army in the Dobrudja and Transylvania had received a sharp setback; there was no change on the rest of the Eastern front.

The plan of the Entente to overwhelm us once and for all in the autumn of 1916, a plan which in August and September still seemed possible of realization, was foiled for the time being. But the fighting on all the fronts was not yet over. At that time we did not know, as we do now in the light of subsequent events, whether the enemy's endurance or our own would give out first. Rumania was not yet beaten. As I now saw quite clearly, we should not have been able to exist, much less carry on the war, without Rumania's corn and oil, even though we had saved the Galician oil-fields at Drohobycz from the Russians.

Since the Field-Marshal and I assumed the supreme command we had made one great step forward, but a second was still to be taken. It meant the continued holding of the fronts and, if we were to survive, a victory over Rumania. The year 1917 opened with this goal still before us. The great Entente offensive

of 1916, with its attendant perils, had been successfully dealt with. We could dismiss it from our minds, but we found ourselves faced with a future fraught with new anxieties.

## IX

The second step to which we had to make up our minds in the middle of October was extremely serious.

It was difficult to strike at the Rumanians through the frontier mountains or across the Danube; still more difficult to provide new troops for the continuation of the operations.

Of course we had given prolonged consideration to the question of how to continue the operations against Rumania. The most profitable operation would be the simultaneous advance of both army groups, with their inner wings on Galatz, or, rather, if Von Mackensen's army could push up to the mouth of the Danube below Galatz, while the Archduke Charles's army group pressed forward to the Sereth above Galatz, taking care to secure their inner flanks. The result of this would be the annihilation of the bulk of the Rumanian Army in Wallachia and the occupation of an area rich in just those warlike resources which we lacked. This splendid idea had occurred to the minds of the commanders on the spot, as well as my own.

Field-Marshal von Mackensen received the division he had asked for—the 217th—in time to enable him to attack the enemy's Tuzla-Cobadinu-Rasova line, and continue his advance to the Danube.

In view of the passive resistance, varied with violent attacks, which the Archduke Charles's army group met with in the frontier mountains from Orsova to the Bukovina, it was soon apparent that the Ninth and the Austrian First Armies had come to a standstill. A continuation of the attack here was no longer possible.

Other plans had to be adopted for the entire operations. Field-Marshal von Mackensen had to beat the enemy in the Dobrudja with the help of the German division which was coming up, though slowly, follow him up with part of his forces, and with the rest effect a crossing of the Danube south of Bucharest. The Ninth Army of Archduke Charles's army group was to cross the Transylvanian Alps into Wallachia. Both armies were then to defeat the enemy and try to effect their junction.

It was not yet certain whether Field-Marshal von Mackensen would cross the Danube near Tutrakan, Rustchuk, or Sistova, and whether General von Falkenhayn, with his main concentration near Orsova, would invade Wallachia by way of the Szurdok or Rotenturm Passes. In any case, the troops which had opposed the Rumanians up to now no longer sufficed. The Rumanian Army was strong; help was to be expected from Russia. Of course both army groups would have every available man ready for the invasion of Wallachia.

I would willingly have reinforced Field-Marshal Mackensen with anything that could be spared, so as to make his front the center of gravity of the whole operations. It was easier to cross the Danube than the mountains where, moreover, snow had already fallen. Besides, the enemy's whole attention was concentrated on the mountain sector. But the condition of the Bulgarian railways precluded any reinforcement of Field-Marshal von Mackensen. We had, therefore, to decide to force the mountain barrier as the first part of the operation; only when this was done and we were well into Wallachia could the Field-Marshal cross the Danube; otherwise with his small force his position would have been dangerous.

The broad outlines of our plan were adhered to, but the knotty question had still to be decided whether the

necessary troops for this operation were really available. I had a severe struggle with myself. The wastage on both the long Eastern and Western fronts had become very great, and the fighting was not yet over. I shut my eyes to all dangers on other fronts; the Commander-in-chief in the East had once again to give up two or three infantry divisions and two cavalry divisions. Besides this, the 7th Cavalry Division was withdrawn from the General Government of Belgium. With this reinforcement the operation could at least be ventured upon, and in the middle of November initiated; whether it could prove successful was, in view of our great weakness, doubtful.

While the new campaign against Rumania was in full swing at the end of October and the beginning of November, and events in that quarter took their course, the battles on the other fronts continued.

The battle of the Somme continued throughout October with great bitterness. On the north bank of the river October 13, 18, and 23 were days of pitched battles of the fiercest description; an unusually severe strain was put upon the troops, but on the whole they stood their ground; our resistance had stiffened. A violent onslaught on November 5 between Bouchavesnes and Le Sars was also beaten off. But in the bitter fighting that followed the French were once more successful. On November 13 the English, too, penetrated our positions on both sides of the Ancre—a particularly heavy blow, for we considered such an event no longer possible, particularly in sectors where our troops still held good positions. On November 14 the English were again successful at this point. The 18th was another day of heavy fighting, but, in spite of the enemy's great expenditure of men, ended, on the whole, favorably for us.

There had also been fighting on the south bank of the

Somme. From October 10 onward the attacks south of the Roman road became still heavier, and later fierce fighting also developed to the north. Here, on October 29, we were successful in our attack on La Maissonnette Farm. This caused general satisfaction, although in itself not of much importance; still, it meant a successful attack for once on the Western front. It is easy to understand the feeling of troops who take part in an offensive action after being subjected to enemy drum-fire for days on end, and manage to make a success of it on a battle-field which had hitherto witnessed defense only and many a disaster to German arms.

As fighting on the French sector of the Somme battle-field died down the position before Verdun again became critical. The French attacked on the 24th; we lost Fort Douaumont, and on November 1 were obliged to evacuate Fort Vaux also. The loss was grievous, but still more grievous was the totally unexpected decimation of some of our divisions. The tension on the Western front was particularly trying at a time when the second deployment against Rumania was not yet complete. Nevertheless, uncertain though the situation was, General Headquarters endured this new trial, to carry through what had been recognized as the only right plan, the defeat of the Rumanian Army and the occupation of Wallachia.

From the middle of November onward we awaited, with great anxiety, the further violent enemy attacks on the Somme and at Verdun which our invasion of Rumania was likely to provoke. But the lull in the fighting which became noticeable on the south bank of the Somme from the beginning of November, and on the north bank toward the end of the month, continued. For the time being the Entente had no longer the strength, nor probably the ammunition, to develop further attacks.

On December 14, 15, and 16, however, there was again very hard fighting round Verdun. The French attacked so as to limit still further, before the end of the year, the German gains of 1916 before this fortress. They achieved their object. The blow they dealt us was particularly heavy. We not only suffered heavy casualties, but also lost important positions.

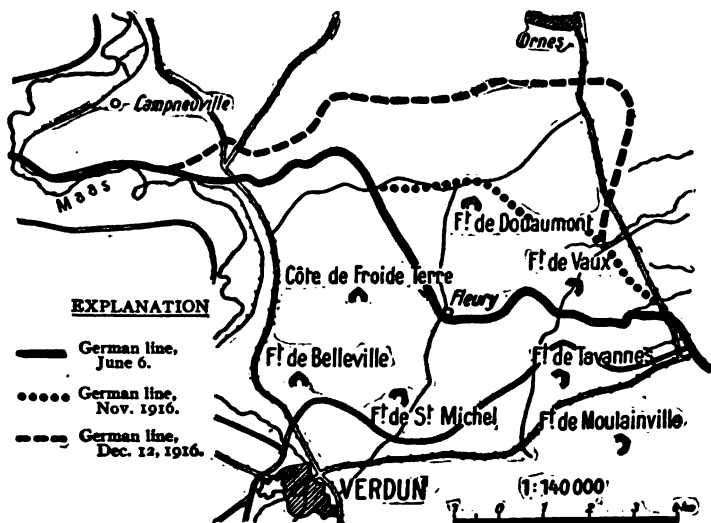


FIG. 13. BATTLES AROUND VERDUN, AUTUMN 1916

The strain during this year had proved too great. The endurance of the troops had been weakened by long spells of defense under the powerful enemy artillery fire and their own losses. We were completely exhausted on the Western front.

On the Italian front fighting was renewed at the beginning of November. On the 7th the ninth Italian Isonzo offensive had to all intents and purposes been repulsed. For the time being there was a lull in the



fighting there. Italy also was not strong enough to relieve the pressure on her ally, Rumania. The Austro-Hungarian troops on that front were themselves so exhausted that new forces could not be spared for use against Rumania.

The situation on the Macedonian front, too, was not to develop in our favor. Rear communications with the Macedonian plain and the mountains on both sides of the river Cerna were still far from complete;

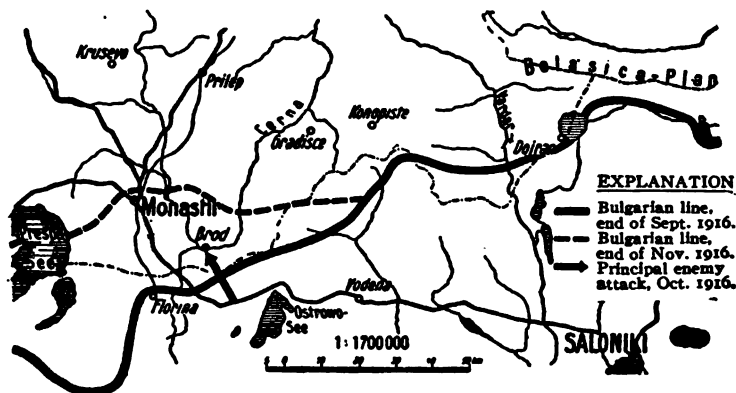


FIG. 14. BATTLES IN MACEDONIA, 1916.

there was too much leeway to be made up. The German army command had but little prospect of establishing the Bulgarian Army firmly in the position from which it started. At an early stage it began the construction of a rear position north of Monastir, across the plain and over the wild and rugged mountains on both sides of the Cerna.

In the middle of October the Entente succeeded in crossing the river near Brod and in capturing key positions in the mountains. This caused the staff of the Eleventh Army to move its line farther back toward Monastir. When, about the middle of November,

the Entente renewed its attacks, the Bulgarian Army gave ground again and again, and had to withdraw fighting to the position north of Monastir.

On the 18th the town was occupied by the Serbs. The Bulgarian Army had been considerably shaken, and we were obliged to make up our minds to bring up to the Macedonian mountains the three or four Jäger battalions which were really intended for Orsova. There could now no longer be any question of taking further Bulgarian troops from this front for the campaign against Rumania. As an immediate effect of our invasion of Wallachia at the end of November and beginning of December, the Entente began heavy relief attacks on our new positions, which we held, however, by fierce fighting. By throwing in our last ounce of strength we victoriously beat off further attacks in the second half of December. Communications improved and supply got better. The position on the Macedonian front again became more stable, unfortunately not without our employing some, even though only a few, German battalions, whose presence in Rumania was, of course, sorely missed.

By the occupation of the Piræus and Athens in October, the Entente had in the mean time gained control of Greece and her railways. Our enemies promoted the formation on a larger scale of contingents of Venizelist troops. Wherever they went they increased their resources for carrying on the war, and this object was the deciding factor in determining their attitude toward Greece.

The Royalist troops were withdrawn from Thessaly in November. Between Florina and Valona a continuous line was gradually being established.

On the front of the Commander-in-chief in the East the Russians made one more powerful but abortive attack, west of Lutsk, on the Pustomity-Saturtzky front,

about the middle of October, after which, attack there gradually died down. Along the Narajovka they continued into November. Russia was at last exhausted. We were still strong enough to make some local attacks that required little preparation, the most important of which took place on the front of Von Woyrsch's army group on November 9. It was quiet on Western lines and was completely successful. We, too, had now come to the end of our strength.

In connection with the battles in Rumania, the Russians continued their attacks in the Carpathians from October well into December.

At the same time an extension of the Russian front to the south was perceptible. Russians and Rumanians attacked on the eastern frontier of Transylvania and Rumania. Our advance in Wallachia provoked even fiercer battles, and brought upon us strong Russian massed attacks, which again produced local crises and tried our nerves severely. The Austrian First Army, in the Transylvania frontier mountains, was in particular heavily attacked, until Bavarian troops restored the position here, too.

## X

At the end of October and the beginning of November, while the fighting on all fronts was still at its zenith and the end was not yet in sight, our second concentration against Rumania was in full swing. It was no simple task. It took a long time, during which we had ample opportunity to reflect over the wisdom of our decision. It would be justified by success. But if it failed, what would then have been the verdict passed on the campaign against Rumania?

After endless supply difficulties had been surmounted, Field-Marshal von Mackensen's preparations in the

Dobrudja were complete by the middle of October. His Chief of Staff was General Tappen, who had been Director of Operations Department at General Headquarters until the beginning of September. He applied himself with zeal to his new and important work, and displayed great foresight.

The attack began on October, 19. By this time the 217th Infantry Division had also come up and been given the place of honor, Topraisar, which it was to storm. Once more German blood had to flow because our allies were not equal to the demands made by this war. The enemy had been considerably reinforced, and, at the beginning of October, attempted to strike at the German-Bulgarian-Turkish Army in the Dobrudja. However, his attacks were not co-ordinated nor pressed with sufficient determination. He let slip the opportunity of which he might have made good use. Field-Marshal von Mackensen's attack resulted, after three days of heavy fighting, in a brilliant breakthrough. The hostile army was thrown back in disorder northward over the Constanza-Cernavoda Railway. The pursuit was relentlessly taken up. By the 23d Constanza, with its rich stores of oil, was in our possession, and soon afterward Cernavoda also fell. The pursuit was not relaxed until we were twenty kilometers north of the railway.

Of course, the question was raised whether the army should not exploit its victory further and press on northward right to the Danube. I vetoed this, as the check to the Archduke Charles's attack in the Transylvanian mountains had, meanwhile, become an irrefutable fact. Even if the Third Bulgarian Army, with its inadequate communications, had pressed forward to the Danube, it would only have been isolated there. It could not have been brought in to co-operate with the Ninth Army in its invasion of West Wallachia. Yet

that co-operation constituted a condition precedent to the success of the whole operation. Much though General Headquarters regretted it, orders were issued for Field-Marshal von Mackensen to cease his advance, prepare to cross the Danube south of Bucharest, and effect the crossing in the greatest possible strength in the latter half of November. The Field-Marshal, on his own responsibility, left only a particularly weak force in the northern Dobrudja. It intrenched a line here and of course its position continued to be very precarious. The bulk of Mackensen's army was transferred to Rustchuk partly by forced marches and partly by the very inadequate Dobrudja Railway, which was gradually getting into working order again. Field-Marshal von Mackensen chose Sistova-Symnitza for his crossing-place. For us, in Pless, this westerly point was convenient, as the Danube Army was thus brought nearer to the parts of the Ninth Army which were forcing their way into West Wallachia.

The region of Orsova, the Vulcan, and Szurdok Passes, or the Rotenturm Pass, presented themselves as gateways into Wallachia from west and north.

And just south of the Rotenturm Pass General Krafft von Dellmensingen, with his Alpine Corps, reinforced by two Austrian mountain brigades, and, after the battle of Hermannstadt, met with a very stubborn resistance in covering the flanks of the Ninth Army, which was pressing forward toward Kronstadt. In order to attract the enemy to his front, and so relieve the burden of this army, he had adopted offense as the best means of defense. In spite of violent fighting, in which the Rumanians often counter-attacked, the Alpine Corps was able to gain but little ground south of the pass by the end of October. It was a case of true mountain warfare in winter, in all its characteristic forms, with all its stupendous difficulties. The troops,

including the Austrian mountain brigades, fought admirably, but it was a terribly slow business.

An attempt by the bulk of the Ninth Army to force the crests at the highest and broadest part, in face of a strong enemy who could no longer be surprised, would also have been hung up, as had been the fate of a similar attack in October, south of Kronstadt. We did not like having to select the western end for our attack, as in this way the strategical possibilities would be diminished; but this could not be helped. The first thing was to get over the mountains somehow. The Ninth Army had made an attempt, at the end of October, to advance south of the Vulcan and Szurdok Passes. This had been foiled by a sudden change of weather and by the vigilance of the enemy. The troops had to be withdrawn as far as the heights overlooking the pass. We had got some idea of the ground, and had come to the conclusion that the forcing of the mountains at this particularly narrow spot was quite practicable. I also relied on the assumption that the Rumanians would not expect here the repetition of an attack which had cost us so heavily; so General Headquarters decided to choose this position in the mountains as our point of sortie. It seemed more favorable than the region of Orsova, where the passes were still to be won.

Profiting by the dearly won experience, we made thorough preparations, even to the smallest detail, and the troops we supplied with complete mountain equipment. Particular attention was given to the improvement of the mountain roads and the accumulation of material, so that there might be no delay in pursuing the enemy. Motor-trolleys, for use on the Rumanian railways, were also held in readiness. Rear communication in Wallachia would be very difficult, in spite of all our foresight, so long as

only the road through the Szurdok Pass was at our disposal.

On November 10 General Kühne had completed his preparations, and the opening of operations was fixed for the 11th. This group, with four infantry and two cavalry divisions, under the command of General Count von Schmettow, was to concentrate here and push forward vigorously through Craiova to the river Aluta. This would mean that it would take the defenses of Orsova on the east and the Rotenturm Pass in the rear. At Orsova a weak brigade, including German cyclist troops under the Austrian Colonel Szivo, was to attack simultaneously. General von Krafft, who was reinforced, and the troops south of Kronstadt were to continue their attacks.

November 11 brought complete success to General Kühne; now at last we reaped the benefit of our enterprise of the end of October. General Kühne crossed the mountains, defeated the opposing Rumanian divisions in the battle of Targu Jiu, on November 17, and had occupied Craiova by the 21st. On the 23d General Count von Schmettow, with his cavalry divisions, had reached the Aluta east of Caracal; the Aluta bridge at this point was in his possession. Farther north our infantry had reached the Aluta opposite Slatina. Here, as farther up-stream, the bridges had been completely destroyed. On the same day, in a thick fog, Field-Marshal von Mackensen had gained a footing on the north bank of the Danube, near Symnitza. Here again the operation had been very well prepared. This is the day we had fixed on to get the armies working in co-operation by exploiting all the possibilities of the situation. Apparently we had been successful, but we were not yet at the end of our difficulties.

Meanwhile, General von Krafft had fought his way farther through the mountains, but had not yet de-

bouched into the plain at Rimnicu Valcea and north of Curtea de Arges.

In the rear of General Kühne's forces the Rumanians, fighting bravely, had withdrawn from Orsova, down the Danube, and were still retreating, keeping close to the river. Though surrounded on all sides, they did not lay down their arms until they had reached the confluence of the Aluta at the beginning of December. Their hope that an attack on the Danube Army by parts of the Rumanian Army from Bucharest would save them was not fulfilled. In the operations east of the Aluta the orders were to press forward relentlessly and effect a junction of the two armies, with their inner wings in the direction of Bucharest. I attached special importance to a rapid crossing of the Aluta by General Kühne's group, in order to secure the left flank of the Danube Army. The other task of the Ninth Army was to press up north from the plain toward the mountain frontier, thereby opening the mountain roads and enabling more of our troops to come down south.

Field-Marshal von Mackensen was to take over the command of the Ninth Army also. As soon as the armies had really effected a junction and proper control had been assured, the Danube Army was placed under the orders of General Kosch. The Ninth Army was to be detached from the Archduke Charles's group. Until all this was done the German General Headquarters had to exercise direct command in the conduct of the operations.

The Danube Army started its forward march on November 25. On the 26th it crossed the Vedeia, and on the 30th its left wing, after heavy fighting, forced its way across the Nejlou plain southwest of Bucharest, while the right wing, keeping level with the left, advanced down the Danube.

On the 27th the Alpine Corps had fought its way out



of the Rotenturm Pass into the plain, had entered Pitesti on the 29th, and on the following day, by exerting its main pressure north of the Arges, gained ground to the southeast. This made it possible for the right wing of the Kronstadt group, which was involved in heavy fighting north of Kimpolung, to debouch from the mountains.

Farther back stood General Kühne. His infantry divisions had made terrific efforts to force a crossing at Slatina, instead of immediately crossing farther south near Caracal, as the cavalry corps had done, and thus gaining time, in spite of having to make a detour. They crossed the Aluta only in the course of the 27th, and on the 30th were still about eighty kilometers from the left wing of the Danube Army and the right of Von Krafft's group.

The Rumanian High Command had intended to hold up Generals von Krafft and Kühne, and attack the Danube Army. Its first object was apparently to hold these two groups on the mouths of the mountain passes at Curtea de Arges and Rimnicu Valcea and the line of the Aluta. When this was no longer possible, the High Command tried again and again to make its First Army, fighting hard, stand on some line farther back, so as even at the eleventh hour to take full advantage of its situation with regard to the Danube Army.

On December 1 the left wing of the Danube Army was very heavily attacked southwest of Bucharest and pushed back. The German troops who had already crossed the Nejlov were cut off. The situation was certainly very critical. The enemy's enveloping movement was stopped only by a Turkish division, which was marching in the second line. The Rumanian attack was not pressed home; the right wing of the Ninth Army was brought up with all possible speed to

meet it. On December 2d the cavalry of the Ninth Army was in position on the action front of the Danube Army. On the 3d we had infantry as well within reach, and so the crisis was overcome. On the 4th we started a counter-attack, which was skilfully evaded by the Rumanians.

In the mean time General Kühne's left wing had effected a junction with General von Krafft's group and forced back the Rumanian First Army eastward across the Arges. Henceforward the Danube Army and the Ninth Army fought side by side. The success of the operation was assured.

It had not been easy to bring the two armies into close tactical co-operation at the last moment on December 1. The attempt had almost miscarried. Even in war, accidents of all kinds have to be reckoned with.

No sooner had this crisis been surmounted than we found ourselves faced with another. Would Bucharest be defended as a fortress or not? Such a defense would have been very awkward for us, for it would have prolonged the campaign in Rumania considerably. The season was already far advanced. We had to make preparations for the following year. All kinds of material necessary for attack had been placed in readiness, and everything possible had been done to hasten the fall of the fortress. A great load was taken off my mind when, on the 6th, the report was received that our cavalry divisions had in the night of December 5 found the northern works of the fortress unoccupied and blown up. On the 6th we were in possession of Bucharest, Ploesti, and Campina. The Rumanians, under English orders and directions, had effected a very thorough destruction of the oil-fields.

So far the Russians had not taken any serious part in the fighting. A Russian thrust on December 5, southeast of Bucharest, was of no importance. It is

not easy to understand why they let the Rumanians be beaten before they came in; they could very easily have sent forces to Wallachia. It was only because the Russians were not there that we were successful. From this time onward the Russians brought up reinforcements. They now seemed to fear for their own flank. They reduced their forces in the Dobrudja in order to be stronger in Wallachia. For the rest of the campaign the object in view was to strike an even more crushing blow at the Rumanians, defeat the Russians, whose arrival was now a certainty, while they were assembling, and bring the operations to a conclusion by reaching the mouth of the Danube-Sereth-Trotusk line. This was the shortest line we could take up. Our military-economic situation made it imperative that we should secure it.

Mackensen's army group was to exert its main pressure in the direction of Buzau-Focsani, break any attempts at resistance in the plain by an enveloping movement from the mountains, and, for the rest, push forward down both banks of the Danube.

General von Conrad had agreed that the right wing of Archduke Charles's army group should join in the attack against the Trotusk.

The battles east of the Bucharest-Ploesti line now assumed a different character from the former ones. Our troops were tired and could attack the enemy only frontally. The possibility of outflanking the enemy was only slight, as he was increasing his forces, especially in the mountains. The Russians were soon in great strength; they fought better than the Rumanians. The supply of ammunition, which was now needed in larger quantities, was a slow business, as communications had become much worse. Heavy rain set in, and was followed toward the new year by an unusually severe frost.

On December 10 the Danube Army and the Ninth Army, on the Jalomnitsa and at Misil, southeast of Buzau, were facing the Rumanian and Russian troops in prepared positions. Yet they succeeded in quickly breaking down their resistance, crossing the Jalomnitsa on the 12th, and taking Buzau, after hard fighting, on the 15th.

On the 17th this army group was already in the plain, before another strong position between the Danube, near the mouth of the Calmatuiu, and the mountains to the southwest of Rimnicu Sarat. In the mountains west and northwest of those positions the Rumanians were in close touch with the troops facing the Archduke Charles's army group.

Meantime, Field-Marshal von Mackensen had ordered the Bulgarian Third Army also to take up a position on the right bank of the Danube. Without meeting any serious resistance, it pushed on as far as the mouth of this river, which was actually reached on December 24. It then wheeled in the direction of the Braila right-bank bridge-head, at and down-stream from Macin. In the plain west of the Danube the army group could not attack until ammunition had been brought up. After a very violent struggle, the Ninth Army broke through the Russian and Rumanian positions at Christmas, and forced the enemy to withdraw his whole front toward the upper Sereth, more particularly in the direction of Braila and Focsani.

South of the Sereth, however, the enemy's resistance was in no way broken, and fighting in Wallachia went on well into January. Our men were in sore need of rest. I was worried as to how I was to get them out of this corner again to the larger theaters of war. Everything possible had been done to put the Rumanian railways into working order again, but they could cope

with only a very limited amount of traffic. We also made preparation to transport troops by way of the Danube, but, with an unusually severe winter setting in, we had to reckon with the freezing up of the river. In spite of all our efforts, it would in any case take a long time to get all our troops away. At last, after another violent battle, the Danube Army took Braila on January 4. It reached the Sereth, down-stream to the confluence of the Buzau. Keeping touch with the Danube Army, the Ninth Army had pushed forward to the Sereth in the course of continuous engagements, in which the Russians pressed us particularly hard on the 6th. On the 8th the Ninth Army captured Focsani and the region north of the town as far as the Putna.

The attacks which the Archduke Charles's army group had initiated about Christmas toward the Trotusk had made no progress whatever. The great exhaustion of the troops, the time, and the weather all demanded the conclusion of the campaign. The line which Mackensen's army group now occupied was approximately the one we had intended to reach. The attack was broken off. The armies dug themselves in on the line on which they stood.

The second stage of the Rumanian campaign was over, thus bringing it to an end. It had been an operation rich in great deeds of valor of our brave troops, in tremendous decisions of the leaders, from junior officers to General Headquarters itself, also in terrible anxieties, which no one felt more intensely than I.

We had beaten the Rumanian Army; to annihilate it had proved impossible. We had done all that was possible, but found ourselves obliged to leave forces in the Dobrudja and Wallachia which we had been able to use on the Eastern and Western fronts and in Macedonia before Rumania came into the war. In spite of our victory over the Rumanian Army, we were

definitely weaker as regards the conduct of the war as a whole.

With the termination of the campaign in Rumania the fighting of the autumn of 1916 was decidedly to our advantage. This triumph was obtained, not only on the battle-fields of Transylvania, Wallachia, and the Dobrudja, where it had found its outward expression, but also in the struggle on the Western front, on the Isonzo, in Macedonia, and the East. It had been a concentration of our whole war strength, with one aim—to ward off the Entente's onslaught and to retain the possibilities of existence. This onslaught had collapsed, and the resources of Wallachia were at our disposal. The immense superiority of the Entente in men and war material had been overcome by the bearing of our troops and the assurance and initiative of our leadership.

In defense, the German troops, in spite of many reverses, had proved their worth; the Austrian troops had succumbed to the Russians; the Bulgarians had frequently disappointed us; and the Turks had done what we expected of them.

In the battles of movement of the Rumanian campaign, German leadership had once more manifested its superiority. The German troops, carrying their allies with them, had beaten a strong enemy through bold, independent action. Where we were on the defensive, the enemy had been successful only by employing masses of technical war material. Where that factor was absent, the German once more proved his superiority.

On all sectors of the vast front the German Army, as indeed every man individually, had given of its best, literally to the last ounce. This alone had made victory possible, a victory the laurels of which world history will award to the German soldiers. We now urgently

needed a rest. The army had been fought to a standstill and was utterly worn out.

The enemy, too, seemed weary. But he still had the strength to deliver his so successful blow near Verdun. His superiority in numbers enabled him to relieve his troops more frequently. We had to reckon with their speedy recovery.

## THE SITUATION AT THE END OF 1916

The Superiority of the Enemy in Man-power and War Material—  
The Question of Peace—The Question of Submarine Warfare—  
President Wilson as an Intermediary for Peace—The Emperor  
Charles and His Counselors.

### I

NOTWITHSTANDING the successful close of the year 1916, the outlook for the coming year was exceedingly grave. It was certain that in 1917 the Entente would again make a supreme effort, not only to make good its losses, which it was certainly in a position to do, but to add to its strength everywhere and swell its superiority in numbers. Though they had not yet recovered, our worn-out troops would have to take the offensive as early as possible, and on a greater scale than in the autumn of 1916, if they were to achieve ultimate victory.

France had already given her children. The battalions consisted now of three, instead of four companies. But she possessed in her colonies extraordinary resources in man-power, on which she drew in ever-increasing measure.

England brought her army up to strength and set about increasing it.

Russia, in particular, produced very strong new formations. Divisions were reduced to twelve battalions, the batteries to six guns, and new divisions were formed out of the surplus fourth battalions and the seventh and eighth guns of each battery. This reorganization meant a great increase in strength.



The Rumanian Army was to be reorganized and trained by French officers. Thanks to the natural affinity of the two races and the influence of France on Rumanian thought, and particularly on the Rumanian Army, it was only to be expected that the French officer soon became familiar with the psychology of the Rumanian Army and accomplished a great deal.

We had to reckon with new formations of Austro-Hungarian prisoners of war and Venizelist Greeks.

Against this Germany and her allies had nothing to throw into the scale. The increase in the artillery which General Headquarters had in view, and the creation of thirteen new divisions which was under consideration, were not a real addition to our strength, as they weakened the existing formations. We could form the infantry battalions only by drawing on current reserves and reducing battalion strengths.

The creation of a Polish army would have been a real reinforcement, but it was soon seen that this would not be possible. There was nothing to do but to drain Germany and the allied countries of all their manpower that was in any way available.

... Dangerous additional strength was given to the enemy's numerical superiority by the ever-increasing devotion of their industries to war purposes. Far-reaching restrictions on labor were passed into law in the Entente countries, and accepted without serious protest; ample labor force was available, and there was no shortage of raw materials; the output per man had not fallen, and life, in short, pursued its normal course. The seas of the world were open to the Entente. The United States was now giving help on the largest scale and breaking new ground. The technical equipment of the Entente armies grew continually stronger and more complete, reaching, indeed, an unprecedentedly high level. This was demonstrated with pitiless clarity

on the Western front. In the East, too, the campaign of 1916 had shown a sensible increase in supply, especially in ammunition. Russia had, to some extent, established a war industry of her own, in part in the Donetz coal-basin, and had greatly increased her output. Japan was steadily giving better deliveries. With the completion of the Murman Railway, and the improvement of the trans-Siberian line, an increased import from Japan, America, England, and France was inevitable. In every theater of war the Entente was able to add to its numerical superiority an enormous additional strength in every department of technical supply, and to destroy our troops on a still greater scale than had been achieved on the Somme and at Verdun.

Much could be done and had to be done by our industries to increase our strength, but plainly no little time would elapse before any arrangements to this end could be carried into effect. It was clear that our munition factories, in spite of their immense output, and however many workmen they might have, would never be able to overtake the enemy, so long as the enormous industrial areas of the latter continued to work undisturbed under what were virtually peace conditions. In the then circumstances it seemed impossible to achieve equality of forces.

With our sensible inferiority in numbers and equipment, training our defensive warfare became more important. It was obvious that our army must be equipped, organized, and trained to the highest pitch, and everything possible was done to achieve this. We knew, however, only too well that the enemy would soon adapt himself to our new tactics and that our advantage was only temporary.

The Supreme Army Command had to bear in mind that the enemy's great superiority in men and material would be even more painfully felt in 1917 than in 1916.

It was plainly to be feared that early in the year "Somme fighting" would burst out at various points on our fronts, and that even our troops would not be able to withstand such attacks indefinitely, especially if the enemy gave us no time for rest and for the accumulation of material. Our position was unusually difficult, and no way of escape was visible. We could not contemplate an attack ourselves, having to keep our reserves available for defense. There was no hope of a collapse of any of the Entente Powers. If the war lasted our defeat seemed inevitable. Economically we were in a highly unfavorable position for a war of exhaustion. There was weakness at home. Questions of the supply of foodstuffs caused great anxiety, and so, too, did questions of morale. We were not undermining the spirits of the enemy populations with starvation, blockades, and propaganda. The future looked dark, and our only comfort was to be found in the proud thought that we had hitherto succeeded in defying the enemy superiority in numbers, and that our line was everywhere beyond our frontiers.

## II

The Field-Marshal and I were fully at one in this anxious view of the situation. Our conclusion was no sudden one, but had gradually grown upon us since we took over our posts at the end of August 1916. As a result of our opinion the construction had been begun as early as September of powerful rear positions in the West; the Siegfried line, running from Arras, west of Cambrai, St.-Quentin, La Fère, Bailly-sur-Aisne, to flatten the wide salient from Albert, Roye, southwest of Noyon, Soissons, Bailly-sur-Aisne, in which the Somme fighting had made a large indentation; and the Michael line, which lay to the south of Verdun and in

front of the line Etain-Gorz, to cut off the salient of St.-Mihiel. These strategic positions had the great advantage of shortening the front and economizing forces, and their occupation was prepared in detail. Whether we should retire on them, and how the positions would be used, was not of course decided in September 1916; the important thing then was to get them built. This made comprehensive measures necessary, and I demanded heavy labor supplies from home. These, however, sufficed only for the West, and corresponding positions in the East had to be left unbuilt.

The construction of positions, the training of the army for defensive warfare, and the enlistment of the civilian population for war work constituted weapons of war of the greatest importance. They were capable of postponing the decision, if the Government once succeeded in bringing the people whole-heartedly into support of the war, but they could never lead to victory. The future was thus full of obscurity, and the soldier could not reckon on chances, so that the questions of peace and submarine warfare became of the highest importance. There was the problem of obtaining peace, the chance of defeat without unrestricted submarine warfare, and the possibility of victory by means of such a campaign, accompanied by an attack by our surface fleet and a defensive war on land.

The description "unrestricted submarine warfare" is not wholly apt, any more than is "submarine warfare without regard to consequences."

The Chancellor was, in September 1916, giving consideration to a possible negotiation for peace through President Wilson. Many circles in Germany were ill disposed to such a step, since the attitude of benevolence adopted by the United States toward the Entente had raised increasing bitterness among us, and the Government could with difficulty disregard this opinion. The

Chancellor nevertheless proposed to His Majesty that instructions should be given to Ambassador Count Bernstorff to induce the President at the earliest possible moment, and in any case before the presidential election at the beginning of November, to make a proposal of peace to the Powers. I was fully in agreement with the suggestion, and secretly very pleased that it was made, although I was skeptical of success, owing to my view of the enemy's desire for our destruction. Their prospects for 1917 were so much more favorable than ours that, even while I hoped for it, I had grave doubts as to the success of any offer from President Wilson. I waited with the greatest eagerness to learn whether he would make a proposal in October, but his re-election in November and the whole of the month of November passed without his making up his mind to do so, and I gave up any hope of his intervention.

Count Burian then came forward with the proposal that the Quadruple Alliance should itself make a direct offer of peace to the enemy. I was equally skeptical as to the success of this scheme, but thought that it should be tried: the only thing to avoid at all costs was any display of weakness. This would have had a very bad effect on the army and the public, and would have encouraged the Entente to redouble its efforts for our destruction. So far as he permitted, I co-operated with the Chancellor in the matter. In order to avoid giving the enemy the false impression that weakness was our motive for the proposal, I asked that it should not be carried out until the campaign in Rumania had been brought to a conclusion. Bucharest fell on December 6, and with that I regarded the military position as so secure that I had no objection to the publication of the peace note. The proposal for compulsory auxiliary service, which had meanwhile

been passed into law, gave the appearance of a determination to continue fighting if our offer was rejected.

His Majesty took a most earnest interest in the peace offer, displaying clearly his high sense of his responsibility to bring peace to the world at the earliest possible moment. On December 12 the peace offer of the Quadruple Alliance was made. There followed an exchange of views as to the conditions of peace which we would be prepared to offer, which was, however, destined to meet its end in the despatch to Count Bernstorff of January 29, 1917.

The reception of our offer by the Entente press was wholly unfavorable. It soon became clear that it would be impossible to come to an understanding. The Entente had its hands tied by arrangements and secret agreements that could be carried out only if we were completely defeated. The answer of the Entente, given on January 30, was such as to leave no doubt of its intention to annihilate us. The objection, that the tone of our offer had from the first made any acceptance impossible, was quite unsound. Our whole position compelled us to adopt a tone of confidence. I advocated this from the military point of view. Our troops had done marvels. How would they be affected by our adopting any other tone? It was essential that the peace offer should not impair the fighting quality of the army, and it did not do so, for it was only an episode, and the morale of the troops was still good. If the Entente had honestly desired a peace of justice and reconciliation it could and should have entered into negotiations and brought forward its demands. Had negotiations broken down on any demand for annexations on the part of the German representatives it would have been easy for the Entente, in the light of such an attitude, to stir its

peoples to renew the war, while we in such a position would have been quite unable to reconcile the German people, who were already longing for peace, to any further fighting. Still less would our weary allies have continued to fight at our side. This simple reasoning shows convincingly that when we made our offer we were genuinely ready for a peace of justice and reconciliation.

The attitude of the Entente on this and on every subsequent occasion shows equally clearly that it wanted no negotiations that might display to the world our sincere desire for peace. It feared that in its own camp this would lead to a weakening in the desire for our destruction and wished also that peace, when it came, should be definitely a peace of defeat and emasculation for us.

Meanwhile President Wilson had at last, on December 20, addressed a note to all the belligerent Powers, inviting an expression of "their views as to the terms on which the war could be brought to an end." The President apparently desired to find an agreement by means of a compromise between the demands of the two sides. He had in mind a peace without victor or vanquished. The note was delivered on December 21. The German Government had been informed of the President's intention in November. Presumably the Government was by this time, after the long delay, in doubt as to whether the President would in fact carry out his intention, but I am not aware in any detail of the Government's attitude at that time.

As early as December 26 the governments of the Quadruple Alliance proposed an early meeting of representatives of the belligerents in some neutral country. They were at variance with Wilson's proposal to the extent that they preferred direct negotiations with their opponents; this may well have been in part

due to regard for the strong trend of public opinion in Germany against the United States. The Entente remained wholly hostile. Its answer of January 12 was a confirmation of its note of December 30, being perhaps still more strongly imbued with the intention of destroying us. The voice of the latter answer is the voice of the iron Lloyd George, who at the beginning of December had assumed, in form as well as in substance, the reins of power in England. It is useful to re-read the answers of the Entente to our offer of peace and to Wilson's note. The judgment of many people as to the possibility of a peace of understanding will then become clearer.

Thus failed the two efforts to achieve peace. By the will of the Entente the war had to continue, and to be decided by force of arms. It was to be victory or defeat. The results were further preparations on a large scale, the maintenance of our determination to fight—this our proposals were designed to achieve—and at the same time the employment of every weapon in Germany's arsenal.

## III

The Field-Marshal and myself, in our view of the whole situation and in our only too correct doubt as to the success of the peace proposals, had already had under consideration, as part of our military problems, the possibility of carrying on the submarine campaign in an intensified form. Unrestricted submarine warfare was now the only means left to secure in any reasonable time a victorious end to the war. If submarine warfare on this scale could have a decisive effect—and the navy held that it could—then in the existing situation it was our plain military duty to the German nation to embark on this form of warfare. \_



As has been mentioned, we had both spoken against the proposal for unrestricted warfare on August 30, expressing the view that the time was not yet ripe for it. Chancellor von Bethmann stated this quite clearly at the time, and added that thenceforth the decision to carry on the submarine warfare in the form of "blockaded area" fighting would depend on the declaration of the Field-Marshal—that is to say, unrestricted submarine warfare was to start when the Field-Marshal wished it to start. The Chancellor spoke to the same effect in the Reichstag on September 28. The question of the expediency of the submarine campaign had meanwhile led to grave differences of opinion among the political parties, and had excited unusual passions. While the parties of the Right were enthusiastically in favor of its adoption, the Left, which was more in touch with the Government, was equally strongly opposed. Von Bethmann's statement for the first time brought the Supreme Army Command into the field of politics to support the Government. This I regretted deeply, and in my view the statement should not have been made. The Supreme Army Command had consistently held aloof from all political activity, and had no wish to alter its policy in this respect, so that the political excitement created by Von Bethmann's step was all the more embarrassing to the Field-Marshal and myself. Nevertheless, the Supreme Army Command came, in fact, more and more to be regarded as responsible for the adoption or non-adoption of unrestricted submarine warfare.

At the beginning of October we had discussed the question of adopting this weapon with the Chief of the Naval Staff. In the course of the correspondence with the Chancellor on the matter we again urged him on October 5 to settle the question of responsibility. He replied on the 6th with the statement that the de-

cision really lay with the Emperor, as the War Lord of the Empire, but that it was also a question of foreign policy, owing to its effect on neutrals; the Chancellor accordingly was, constitutionally, the only person responsible, and could not transfer the burden to any one else; but the attitude of the Field-Marshal to the matter would naturally have the greatest weight with him. This standpoint was unexceptionable. The Field-Marshal was not in a position to take any of the Chancellor's responsibility, and had never even thought of doing so; I quite agreed with him. The Chancellor's declaration was, however, a substantial change of front when compared with his earlier statements, which had been made on the assumption that we were opposed to the submarine warfare.

In October 1916 submarine cruiser warfare began, ships being stopped and searched. This met with some success, and had a disturbing effect upon the economic situation of the enemy. This success spoke well for the submarine weapon, but the enemy's defensive measures against our boats were soon improved, and results fell off considerably.

In estimating the economic effects of the various forms of submarine warfare we were compelled to rely upon the judgment of the Chief of the Naval Staff and of the Chancellor. The Supreme Army Command was in constant communication with both these authorities on the whole matter, and in particular on the question of the expediency of adopting unrestricted warfare.

After our victories in Rumania the Supreme Army Command did not expect that either Holland or Denmark would enter the war against us. It was, however, unwise to take any risks, the unrestricted campaign could obviously not be instituted before the Rumanian campaign was at an end and our troops there had returned home and arrived on the Western and Eastern

fronts. It was soon clear that this would not be the case before the beginning of February. It also seemed plain that we should have to hold our hands to see whether any success would be achieved by any intervention by President Wilson, along the lines indicated by our Government in September, or by our own offer of peace. If the end of the war should appear to be in sight, submarine warfare on the lines proposed would be unnecessary. There was really no room for doubt. The result of our efforts for peace would be sure to be known by the end of December or early in January, and this, too, seemed to point to the beginning of February as the date for opening the unrestricted campaign, if this should prove necessary.

The Government had by now lost its early anxiety as to the attitude of Holland and Denmark, and none was felt as to Switzerland, Spain, Sweden, or Norway. On the other hand, it thought it very probable that the United States would join in the war against us. The Supreme Army Command had to take into account, in dealing with the military situation, the views thus expressed in the responsible quarters. It would involve an addition to the armed forces of the Entente of five or six divisions in the first year after America entered the war, and later on, if the submarine war did not have a decisive effect, a serious, indeed a vital increase in the strength of the enemy. It could not be doubted that America, if she came into the war, would arm herself in the same way that England had done, and that the Entente would lead the United States from one energetic step to another. I had, however, no serious fear as to any increased output of munitions in the States, as they were already working with all their might for the Entente.

The Chief of the Naval Staff, a friend of the Chancellor, but at the same time a warm partizan of the

unrestricted submarine war, was confident that the campaign would have decisive results within six months. The loss of freight space and the reduction of oversea imports would produce economic difficulties in England that would render a continuance of the war impossible. In forming this view he did not rely merely upon his own professional judgment, but was also supported by the opinions of distinguished German economists. The shortage of shipping would cut down the transport of munitions, and in particular the transport from England to France, which traffic could also be directly attacked. The number of submarines in commission was sufficient for the work, and our Admiralty was also of the opinion that construction, if it was pressed to the utmost, would amply cover losses. In 1916, after submarine warfare had really been abandoned in principle, construction had not been pressed very vigorously. The question of crews could, it was thought, be solved. They would have to be drawn mainly from the second-line fleet, which consisted of the oldest ships, but the other vessels also would have to release officers and engineers in the prime of their service years.

The surface fleet was not, of course, to fall below a certain standard of strength. It had to be maintained at a sufficient level, in the face of the enemy forces, which were constantly increasing through new construction, and might be further strengthened by the adhesion of the Americans, to assist in the maintenance of the submarine campaign. It had the duty of insuring the passage of the submarines through the enemy mine-fields. It remained, in fact, sufficiently formidable to thwart every attempt of the enemy to interrupt sea traffic in the Baltic.

The Chief of the Naval Staff also hoped that the declaration of unrestricted warfare would have a de-

terrent effect upon neutral shipping, which had, up to then, been of great assistance to the Entente. He was quite convinced of the necessity for the strongest support, on this point, from political quarters, which proved in the event to be sometimes lacking.

The amount of shipping necessary for the transport of troops from America to France and for the supply of reinforcements was discussed. Our navy reckoned that the freight space required for the transport of an army with baggage and reinforcements amounted to five British register tons per man. This estimate was confirmed by our experience in the attack on Oesel in the autumn of 1917. It would thus be necessary, in order to transport 1,000,000 American soldiers in a reasonable time, to employ 5,000,000 tons of shipping space. Such a quantity of shipping, in view of the necessity for maintaining supplies to the Western Powers, could not be spared even temporarily.

The economic value of the campaign was the subject of varying opinion in our Government. The Ministry of the Interior gradually came round (and this only after the campaign had begun) to a view of its high value, and the Chancellor adopted this view also.

With my knowledge of the military situation and my firm views as to the determination of the enemy I did not accept literally the estimates of our Admiralty as to the probable effects of unrestricted submarine warfare; I knew, moreover, that questions of transport and of economics generally are very difficult to decide. I did, however, think it safe to reckon that it would have a decisive effect within twelve months—that is to say, before America could throw her new formations into the scale. I hoped that, with the measures already taken and to be taken, we could hold out for this period on land, assuming that the submarine campaign produced sufficient disturbance of the enemy's economy

to reduce his industrial output of war material, and cut down substantially his shipments of munitions to France. For the first few months I attributed the greatest importance to the latter point.

I was greatly impressed with the seriousness of the position by a tour which I took of the Western front at the middle of December, with a view to reviewing the whole situation, and telegraphed my views to Berlin; at that time I had already abandoned hope of any success from our offer of peace. In a long discussion on December 23 the Field-Marshal expressed to the Chancellor his view that the adoption of unrestricted submarine warfare was essential. The latter on the 24th stated that he was ready to initiate discussion on the matter as soon as the answer expected from the Entente to our peace proposal had brought the matter more or less to finality; he repeated, however, his declaration of October 6 to the effect that the adoption of the campaign was a question of foreign policy, and that he and he alone bore and could bear the constitutional responsibility for the step. Our view of the matter had not changed. The Chancellor had his responsibilities to bear, and we had ours. In a telegram to Von Bethmann the Field-Marshal made his position clear in the following words: "... Your Excellency as Chancellor can, of course, claim the sole responsibility, but I must clearly work, with all my strength and with a full sense of my responsibility, for the victorious end of the war, to see that everything is done which I hold as proper for the achievement of that end." That was the right and duty of the Supreme Army Command, just as it was the right and duty of the Chancellor, in this difficult and momentous question, to support his own opinion with all the prestige of his high office. If there were differences of opinion, the decision lay with His Majesty.

As it seemed probable that the answer of the Entente, both to our offer of peace and to Wilson's proposal for intervention, would be a refusal, the Chancellor came to Pless to discuss the question as early as the end of December, but nothing definite was then decided. The actual decision was arrived at on January 9, after the receipt of the answer to our peace offer, and in the certainty that a like reply would be given to President Wilson, at a meeting presided over by His Majesty. The Chief of the Naval Staff expressed the views stated above; he advised that the campaign would be decisive in a few months, and urged its adoption. The Field-Marshal reported our view of the situation, and also advised its adoption. The Chancellor stated the effect that the use of this weapon might have upon neutrals, and in particular upon the United States. He thought it possible, and indeed probable, that the United States would enter the war, and anticipated difficulties with regard to the provisioning of Belgium by the Entente. He regarded our offer of peace as having failed; he saw no other possibility of achieving peace, not even by a new attempt on the part of Wilson (the note of December 18 had already failed); he had no hope of a separate peace, and he did not anticipate any improvement in our position through the collapse of one of our enemies, such as subsequently happened in the case of Russia. The likelihood of this happening would, of course, have altered the whole situation and would have had the greatest weight in the formation of our opinions. The Chancellor's judgment as to our military position was the same as our own. While we felt compelled resolutely to draw the inevitable and serious inference, and act upon it, the Chancellor, as his nature was, remained undecided, but came to such conclusions as: "The decision to embark upon the campaign depends upon the

effects which are to be expected from it," and, "If the military authorities regard it as essential, I am not in a position to withstand them," and, "If success beckons, we must take the step."

However, with a full sense of his political responsibility, the Chancellor did advise the adoption of the campaign, as did His Majesty's other advisers. The Emperor fell in with their views and commanded that the campaign should open on February 1; he directed, however, that time should be given to neutral vessels in the blockaded area to leave it, and to neutral vessels on their way to the area to complete their voyages.

The Chancellor then prepared, in co-operation with the Chief of the Naval Staff, the notes to neutral Powers as to the declaration of the blockade area around England, along the west coast of France, and in the Mediterranean. These were to be delivered on January 31.

The Chief of the Naval Staff gave the detailed instructions for operations in the blockaded area, making various concessions to the wishes of the Foreign Office in order to lessen the danger of a rupture with America. We were, of course, quite in accord with this.

The Supreme Army Command, on its side, took certain precautionary measures in the northern army district, in order to be ready for all eventualities, although the Chancellor had no anxiety as to the attitude of Holland and Denmark.

The construction of defensive positions in northern Schleswig had made good progress, and there was no need to do more than to reinforce the frontier guard with a few cavalry. An army corps staff was moved thither temporarily, in order to accustom itself to local conditions. On our Dutch frontier the frontier troops were grouped in divisional formations and placed under an army corps staff that was stationed at Münster. The construction of defensive works was here much in



arrears. Not too much had been done, either, on the Dutch-Belgian frontier, owing to shortage of men. Further defensive measures were merely worked out on paper, and the troops released from the operations in Rumania were to carry them out only if necessity arose, and were otherwise to be employed on the Western front. They were in the first instance moved into Belgium.

## IV

In the middle of January the Supreme Army Command received from the Foreign Office a transcript of a despatch from Count Bernstorff of January 10, to the effect that the note dealing with armed merchant-vessels "would frustrate President Wilson's proposals for intervening to negotiate peace." This surprised me, as all idea of any definite intervention by the President had vanished. Count Bernstorff could not be referring to anything else than the step taken by the President on December 18, which was not officially answered by the Entente until January 12, but was definitely put an end to by that answer, as we had anticipated. I was unaware of any new step or proposal, and so was the Chancellor. He accordingly replied to Bernstorff on January 16, "We are resolved to take the risk" (of rupture and even of war with the United States). This cablegram had probably not reached Count Bernstorff when he wired again to the Foreign Office: "Unless military considerations are absolutely decisive, it would be highly desirable to postpone institution" (of the unrestricted warfare). "Wilson believes he can secure peace on the basis proposed by us of equality of rights for all nations."

In forwarding us this cablegram the Secretary of Foreign Affairs wrote that he had urged the Chief of the Naval Staff to lessen the danger of a rupture with

America by fixing certain definite periods of grace for neutral ships, which the ambassador had proposed. I at once replied that we agreed to this. It is clear that the Foreign Office had not concluded, even from this second communication from Bernstorff, that there was any modification of the general situation, for the Secretary would otherwise have mentioned it.

I never had a clear understanding of the correspondence between the Government and the Ambassador; indeed, I learned of it only in fragments.

I knew nothing of the progress of the negotiation with the United States. The Chancellor and the Secretary of Foreign Affairs complained of the difficulties of communication and of the resulting ambiguities. They had, of course, to use every possible chance to avoid a rupture with the United States, in spite of the existence of the unrestricted campaign.

On January 29, unexpectedly, so far as I was concerned, Chancellor von Bethmann and Secretary Doctor Zimmermann arrived at Pless. We were bidden to attend a discussion with the Emperor over a new proposal for intervention by President Wilson. The Chancellor read a despatch which he had drafted for transmission to Count Bernstorff, in which he proposed that we should declare for peace on the *status quo ante* basis.

So far as I remember, the despatch proposed the submission to President Wilson, then or on any later opportunity, the following claims as the basis for possible peace negotiations:

"Restoration of the portions of Upper Alsace occupied by France.

"A frontier securing Germany and Poland strategically and economically against Russia.

"Restoration of colonies on the basis of an agreement securing to Germany colonial possessions cor-

responding to her population and her economic interests.

"Return to France of the territory occupied by Germany, subject to strategic and economic rectification of frontiers, and to financial compensation.

"Restoration of Belgium, subject to definite guaranties for Germany's safety, which would be negotiated with the Belgian Government.

"Economic and financial adjustment on the basis of the exchange of conquered territories given up by either side to the other on the conclusion of peace.

"Indemnity to German concerns or subjects injured by the war.

"Renunciation of all economic measures or treaties calculated to interfere after the conclusion of peace with normal trade or communication, and the conclusion of the commercial agreements necessary thereto.

"The guaranteeing of the freedom of the seas."

These are the only German conditions which ever reached the enemy from our side with any co-operation on my part.

The Chancellor did not suggest a postponement of the unrestricted campaign, but the ambassador was authorized to explain that our Government was ready to order the cessation of the campaign immediately any basis for peace negotiations was worked out that offered any real hope of success. The Field-Marshal and I agreed to this.

The whole discussion took place in one of the Emperor's rooms and occupied but little time. The Emperor's birthday presents were still lying about, and I remember in particular a fine picture of the cruiser *Emden*. I know no more than the above as to the circumstances surrounding this diplomatic step, nor the course which it followed. I mentioned to the Field-Marshal, after the discussion was over, my resentment

at the manner in which our co-operation in these tremendously important decisions had been obtained. Although we had no clear knowledge of the situation, we had to bear our share of the moral responsibility.

On January 31 our note as to the declaration of the submarine campaign was delivered in Washington, as also, I assume, was the Government's above-mentioned proposal of January 29.

After January 9 there were no military reasons whatever to cause either the Field-Marshal or myself to modify our views as to the urgent need for the unrestricted campaign.

According to a report from the Chief of the Naval Staff in Vienna, the Austro-Hungarian Government also decided to wage unrestricted warfare with its submarines. I welcomed with gratitude this loyal act on the part of our allies, which I had, of course, confidently expected. The new campaign could be really effective only if it included the Mediterranean, where prospects of success seemed particularly good; the important thing was to sink as much shipping as possible. General von Conrad had also advocated the adhesion of Austria to the campaign.

When, later, in 1918, Count Czernin stated that he had adopted this policy in order to avoid a quarrel with Germany, he stated something that was quite new to me. There was never any idea of bringing military pressure to bear upon Austria-Hungary.

In judging public opinion on the matter at home, I regarded as a very important element the sitting of the Reichstag of February 27, in which it appeared that, after the failure of our peace offer, the German people were practically unanimous in supporting the Government. The leader of the Majority Socialists, Herr Scheidemann, while refusing any responsibility for the submarine campaign, spoke as follows:

"Every one will understand the deep satisfaction which we felt when we learned that the Government had made an offer of peace to the world, based on views similar to our own. When the enemy's notorious reply to Wilson stripped the veil from his plans for conquest and annihilation, the determination to defend our country resolutely was again restored. There was then but one voice—anything rather than such a peace! No one had expected that the enemy would accept the German invitation to a conference without some show of reluctance, without emphasizing his own strength, without a certain maneuvering for position and preliminary negotiation; but it is equally certain that no one had anticipated a tone so brutal and provocative, or a peace program so extravagant, so utterly at variance with the facts of the situation. They will never wipe away the stain of the crime against humanity committed by their brutal refusal of Germany's peace offer. Lloyd George is the true godfather of our Government's resolution to adopt the unrestricted submarine campaign. Once this resolution has been made, and the campaign has begun, we, too, can but hope with all our hearts that it will bring us peace quickly. We trust in the national strength, now fully mobilized, to achieve what our enemies hold to be impossible. Our honor, our existence, our free economic development, must come unimpaired out of this terrible struggle."

That was a noble profession of faith, and in the face of the enemy's will to annihilation, a call to fight to the last. One hoped that it might be realized.

## v

On November 21, 1916, the Emperor Francis Joseph passed to his long rest. The cohesion of the peoples

of the double monarchy had depended upon him. He had not, it is true, succeeded in giving new life to the monarchy, for the advisers whom he chose were not strong enough for the task. He was a loyal friend of the alliance, even if he never forgot 1866, when Prussia and Austria had fought for hegemony in Germany.

At the beginning of April 1916 the fiftieth anniversary of Field-Marshal von Hindenburg's entry into the service was celebrated in Kovno. I made a short speech on that occasion, and chanced to mention, without adding any comment, that the Field-Marshal, in the first year of his service, had taken part in the campaign of 1866. My speech had hardly been reported when I received a letter from Chancellor von Bethmann, to the effect that offense had been caused in Vienna by my reference to the campaign of 1866. He begged me to prevent it being reported, but that was already impossible. I was as much surprised by the attitude of the Vienna court as by the letter from Berlin. The 1866 campaign, it appears, had left a deep and permanent impression on the Emperor Francis Joseph. In that campaign he had lost his confidence in his army and he never fully regained it, although he worked hard for it, and held high the old traditions of his Imperial force.

His death was an irreparable loss to us.

The murdered heir, the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, was not the man of action he was commonly held to be. Indeed, he was naturally vacillating and irresolute, and by no means friendly to Germany. Our Emperor made great efforts to turn the Archduke and his wife to a friendly attitude to us. His death was a tragedy and its results disastrous; they have brought about for Austria, after four years of war, the fate that Russia, the real author of the tragedy, intended; true, Russia

has ruined herself in the process. The murdered heir would not have been the man to have taken over the guidance of the double monarchy after the death of the aged Emperor; the separatist tendencies had grown too strong during the war. Mismanagement had increased. In many districts there was bad morale, both in the army and among people. War weariness was growing, and the longing for peace was greater every day. It would have required no ordinary man to restore the fighting spirit to the double monarchy and bring new life into the Austro-Hungarian Army.

I first saw the Emperor Charles in December 1914 as Archduke. He gave the strong impression of youthfulness. At the beginning of November 1916 I saw him again. He had grown up and become more manly, and spoke well on military subjects. The burden of his new and high position was, however, to become too heavy for him. Anxiety grew upon him. He was always striving, and at the same time gave way to many men and in many matters. He was conscious of the internal political difficulties of his double monarchy, and had plans for a league of the peoples of Austria under the House of Hapsburg; at the same time he was unable to bring the Hungarians to a less selfish policy, and could not make them abandon their foodstuffs blockade against Austria. It was characteristic of him that he pardoned the Czech leaders who had openly worked against the monarchy; his fear of the Czech movement, and the whole weakness of the Government and the monarchy, were rendered notorious by this conduct. The only consequence was an encouragement of the separatist tendencies among his non-German peoples, and grave mistrust among his Germans, who stood firm in their loyalty to their Imperial house. The army, too, felt it as a slight, especially the German officers and men, who were

fighting courageously for the Imperial house and the double monarchy. Countless of their German brothers had met their death on the field of battle through Czech troops going over to the enemy.

The Emperor Charles, although by no means a convinced supporter of the alliance, held firmly to Germany. He wanted peace, but in his anxiety to achieve it he went too far in his letters to his brother-in-law, Prince Sixtus.

The Emperor Charles attached great importance to his position as supreme commander of the Austro-Hungarian Army. At his wish the stipulations governing the supreme command of the forces of the Quadruple Alliance were altered and somewhat weakened. Without being truly soldierly, he wanted to give his best to his army.

The Empress Zita, who had great influence over her husband, had strong political opinions. She was, unfortunately, wholly unfriendly to us and in the hands of priests who were not well disposed to Germany.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs was Count Czernin, a man of cleverness and wide experience, an educated and amiable personality, and far above the Wilhelmstrasse. In the main, he pursued the same path as the Chancellor in Berlin. He desired peace, but only hand in hand with Germany. He must be given the tribute of praise, that he was loyal. At the same time he held earnestly and with uncommon ability the brief for the double monarchy. In dealing with his Imperial master he showed calmness and firmness. Nevertheless, he gave his authority to the pardon to the Czechs and to the Emperor's uncertain policy toward the subject peoples. He remained in office, although he did not approve of the pardon, and although this step, symptomatic as it was of the impending collapse of the double monarchy, was bound to make peace more



difficult and to strengthen the hopes of the Entente for victory.

Personally I had a great liking for the Count and took no little pleasure in his conversation, but he, unfortunately, was too ready to repeat the Wilhelmstrasse gossip about my "dictatorship." I often explained to him how unfounded this supposition was.

General von Arz was made Chief of the General Staff of the Austro-Hungarian Army, in the place of General von Conrad, who took over the command of the army group on the Tyrol front. I had always been on terms of the greatest confidence with General von Conrad, so that from the personal point of view I saw with unmixed regret this great general leave his office.

My relations with General von Arz were, however, to become even more intimate. He was a convinced friend of the German Empire and the German Army. During the summer campaign of 1915 he had commanded the 6th Austro-Hungarian Army Corps as part of the Eleventh Army, and in close co-operation with German troops had led it with such ability as to earn for himself and his corps the highest German regard. As commander of the First Army in Transylvania he achieved everything that was humanly possible with the material at his disposal. He achieved a large measure of cordial relation between the German and the Austro-Hungarian troops in his army, and devoted himself whole-heartedly to their training. Perhaps not so agile of mind as General von Conrad, he was a soldier of sound grasp, who did his utmost to improve the army and to get for it from the country everything it needed. He did the best that could be done, without achieving anything decisively great. He improved as time went on.

General von Arz selected as his director of operations General von Waldstätten, a capable and ambitious

officer, who earned the confidence of his chief and of the army.

Good liaison and co-operation between ourselves and the Austrian headquarters was thus a certainty for the future.

## THE REASONS FOR THE FURTHER PROSECUTION OF THE WAR, AND THE CONDITION OF THE FORCES

The Auxiliary Service Law—The Hindenburg Program—The Supplies of Raw Material—The Question of Food-supplies—The Importance of Rumania in the Conduct of the War—The Fight Against the Home Front—The Deterioration of the People's Morale and the Control of the Press—Propaganda—The Troops and Their Leaders—The Polish Question.

### I

THE war called upon us to gather together and throw into the scale the last ounce of our strength, either in the fighting line or behind the lines, in munitions work or other work at home or in Government service. Each citizen could serve his country only in one post, but in some way his strength should be used to that end. Service to the State was the important thing. In general the distribution of forces among the army, the navy, and home services was carried out by the Supreme Army Command in co-operation with the civil officials concerned. The former alone could supervise the whole matter in detail, for even the Prussian Minister of War had but an insufficient and partial view of the forces at the enemy's disposal and of the needs of the situation.

Up to this time the army in the field had received adequate reinforcements from returned wounded (of whom, thanks to our admirable medical service, a very high proportion came back to the line), from the yearly

classes as they were called up, and from re-examinations and comb-outs. We were forced to send men of nineteen to the front; younger men could not be sent. The medical standards were reduced, and the vast majority of the available men called up. It was still necessary, however, not merely to send into the army all the men then available, but also to find some new source of supply beyond these; in particular it was vital to reduce the numbers of exemptions. At the same time, we had to find the labor needed for the work behind the lines, where the construction of positions was of simply incalculable importance, and to keep up the war industries at home.

"Fit for garrison duty only" was always a thorn in my side. When everything was at stake, why should not the garrison duty man, who was employed at the front, carry a rifle as much as the "general service" man? The men, however, looked upon their garrison duty classification as a sort of passport to safety. The Supreme Army Command never succeeded in adjusting this conception to the urgency of the army's needs or in getting rid of the ill effects of this classification. An order of the Minister of War, issued in the autumn of 1918, was too late to do any good. In the mean time, the standard of fitness for general service had been again revised, and below the class of "garrison duty in the field or at home" there was created another, "labor duty."

The system of re-examination and control generally at home seemed to me to be defective. Complaints of the most incredible shirking were always being made. I urged the War Ministry to act energetically, which was only bare justice. I never, however, was able to feel that in this respect things were as they should be for the sake of morale in the field and at home.

The (Auxiliary Service) law left untouched labor that

should have been devoted to the State. The duty of service was laid only on men between seventeen and forty-five. I regarded this limitation as quite inappropriate in view of the iron necessities of the war.

As early as September 1916 the Chancellor received the first demands of the Supreme Army Command for the unsparing application of all forces. We insisted emphatically on the point of view that in war the strength of every citizen belongs to the State, and that accordingly every German from fifteen to sixty should be under an obligation to serve, an obligation which, with certain limitations, lay on women, too. The duty could be fulfilled by service at the front, or by work, in the widest sense, at home, and was in no sense limited to workmen in the ordinary meaning of the word, although it, of course, fell mainly upon them.

The introduction of compulsion for war services was of the greatest moral importance, placing, as it did, every German at the service of the State in these anxious times, in accordance with the oldest principles of German law. It should also have had the great practical advantage of giving the Government the control over rates of wages. It was one of the most crying injustices of the war—and must have been so felt by the troops—that they, who were risking their lives daily, were much worse off than any of the workmen who lived in safety. While the soldier was fighting for himself, his wife and children, he could think only with anxiety of his future and the maintenance of his family. The separation allowances were in no way sufficient. The longing to get back home, which could be sufficiently explained by the desire for personal safety, had also a higher motive in family affection. The same feeling kept many a man at home, and gave to service in the face of the enemy an air of punishment. This was a thoroughly unsatisfactory position.

The pay of the fighting men should have been raised—and I attempted, without any real success in the face of official opposition at home, to have it raised—and the wages of workmen should have been kept down to a reasonable level. This would have, of course, involved considerable reductions in war profits, for wages and profits necessarily stand in close interrelation. Such a course would have saved considerable sums, thus easing our budget and conserving our capital. I was not unaware of the difficulties of the problem, having regard for the universal rise in prices due to the shortage of raw materials, but I hoped that it would be solved and that the way to a sound position would be discovered. A law establishing the general duty of service would have shown the way to the solution.

The introduction of general conscription, coupled with that of compulsory civilian service, was not of itself sufficient. It was essential, too, to see that the labor thus obtained was profitably used, and that the State did not lose the benefit of it.

It was clear to me that measures of this sort would involve far-reaching interference with administration, with trade, and with private life. It was also not to be forgotten that too many restrictions tend to stultify individual effort. Opposition was bound to arise, even when the demands made did no more than correspond with the iron necessity of the war. Self-seeking and profit-hunting were already firmly rooted. We had, however, to show the people the way to victory, to make them see the facts clearly and settle their own destiny. The Reichstag, and with it the whole people, had to share the responsibility. On October 30, 1916, the Chancellor was especially urged to secure this end. I hoped that the Government would be prepared to adopt the great principle of universal service, and to bring the people to consider what further strength

they could devote to their country. It required an unselfish understanding on the part of the people, to shake themselves free from the self-seeking of domestic politics, to devote themselves wholly to the war, and to translate into action the proposals of the Supreme Army Command.

The Government did not take these steps. I had still at that time unlimited confidence in the German people and the German working-class. The war was life or death for us all; this should be made clear to the workers, and then, as I believed, they would be certain, in their knowledge of the great danger threatening them and their country, to range themselves behind the Supreme Army Command and to give even more than they had already given. The German workman had already done wonders, but he could still do more. Just as troops, in the hour of peril, are enabled to do their utmost through patriotism inculcated by discipline, so in a long war the people are held together and kept on their feet by firm leadership and a clear conception of the danger threatening their country. The enthusiasm of the moment passes—that is inevitable—and it must be replaced by discipline and understanding. That this could be achieved I had no doubt.

Even without any new legislation the Government could help us. The laws dealing with a state of siege and with war services gave the necessary powers to obtain the labor required, but the Government lacked the necessary determination to apply them properly. The administration of these laws, however, would amount to a mere application of force, from which, on reflection, I saw little hope of real success. I thought that it would be better to have a law supported by the approval of the whole people, one which would make plain to the whole world our determination to hold out. This, too, I explained to the Chancellor.

At last, after two months' delay and after much unedifying pressure from the Supreme Army Command, the Government made up its mind, in November, to introduce into the Reichstag the Auxiliary Service bill, which was passed on December 2. It was neither fish nor fowl and very different from what we had desired. The bill departed too far from the principle of universal liability to service, which we had laid down in September, and gave no security that the labor strength obtained would be so employed as to produce the maximum results. In practice, the law, largely owing to the manner in which it was administered, was but a shadow of the reality we desired, a reality which would have devoted the whole strength of the nation to the nation's service, and so supplied reinforcements for the army and labor for the army and for home industries. In the whole text of the statute the first paragraph alone bears any resemblance to what the Supreme Army Command had aimed to secure.

The provisions did not cover even women, although there were many available to replace men at their work and release them for the army.

In spite of everything, I gave the law at first a warm welcome. Friend and foe alike attributed to it, as a sign of our determination, a far higher value than it really possessed. In connection with our successes in Rumania, it was bound to have considerable moral effect.

I followed the course of the discussions in the Reichstag with unminged regret. This was the first time in the war that I had the opportunity, and also, in my position as Quartermaster-General, the duty, to do so. The Supreme Army Command obtained by this means an insight into the spirit of the population that was of decisive importance for the issue of the war. It was



certain that the Government was in a very delicate position in dealing with the difficult labor questions. It should have followed a strong war policy, instead of a weak and submissive domestic policy. Why did it not boldly and clearly make the whole people share the responsibility for the result of the war? Certain parties in the Reichstag seemed unable to realize the necessity of postponing party interests for the general good in the hour of peril. The Government, the Reichstag, and a great part of the population had never yet understood the character of modern warfare, which lays claim upon all one's resources, nor had they ever realized the importance to ultimate victory of their full co-operation in the fight. The Supreme Army Command had again and again to emphasize that the war meant life or death to Germany.

It soon became clear that the Auxiliary Service law was not merely insufficient, but positively harmful in operation. It was particularly irritating to the troops to find auxiliary workers, at the same work and in the same positions, being far better paid than the men who had been called up for service under the previous legislation and were now under military command. These grievances were increased by the circumstance that exempted men were paid the same wages as free workmen—that is to say, as the auxiliary workers. This was wholly unjust and unfair. On the lines of communication there were still greater contrasts. Troops withdrawn from the heavy fighting at the front saw auxiliary workers and women workers working in peace and safety for wages far higher than their own pay. This was bound to embitter the men who had to risk their lives day by day and to endure the greatest hardships, and of necessity increased their dissatisfaction with their pay. The employment of highly paid auxiliaries on the lines of communications was

thus a two-edged sword. There was something fundamentally unsound in such conditions.

The measures introduced in September with a view to bringing up all possible man-power had thus had but a very scanty result. The latent strength among the people had not been properly brought out; in part it had escaped control, and in part it was being wasted. Too many men who should have gone to the army were left at home. The efforts of the Supreme Army Command had failed; the conviction was forced upon us that the German people were no longer sound at heart.

To increase the esteem in which war work and auxiliary service were held I proposed the institution of the Auxiliary Service Cross. Later on I was one of the first to receive it, and, having regard for the tremendous importance I attributed to the carrying out of the work demanded by the Supreme Army Command, wore it as proudly as my other decorations, even if with a certain melancholy. I was thinking of the working of the Auxiliary Service law, which disappointed me more and more heavily as time went on.

To obtain the necessary skilled workers for the increased production of war material the Supreme Army Command had to draw heavily upon the resources of the army in man-power, weakening the fighting forces correspondingly. In the winter of 1916-17 alone 125,000 men were sent back home, to be returned to the army as soon as they could again be spared. I pressed persistently for arrangements to be made as rapidly as possible between the military and the industrial world for the formation of a body of substitute skilled labor, and for the employment of disabled men and of women in such work. It is true that a great deal was done, but nowhere was the energy used that our position demanded.

It came in the end to this, that the exempted men formed a privileged class, and it was no longer possible to exercise any control over them.

The increase in war industries, no doubt, brought enormous material reinforcement to the army, but it also cost us a heavy price in man-power. The more acute this situation became, and the greater the need of increased man-power owing to the constantly increasing strength of the enemy, the more did the Supreme Army Command hold it to be its duty to the country, to the army, and to each individual soldier fighting at the front to insist on the men at home really working hard. No more men could be withdrawn or withheld from the army. The fall in labor output which could not be wholly explained by working and living conditions, and the strikes, were each deadly and direct blows against the country's capacity for the fight. They were a sin against the man at the front, and also, according to the Supreme Court of the Empire, an act of high treason against the country. Without political guidance, and infatuated by agitators, some of the members of the German working-class have precipitated their country, their fellows, and themselves into immeasurable misery; this will always remain as a terrible indictment against them.

The Government should have made especial endeavors to influence the working-class by full explanation of the seriousness of our position, and should also not have hesitated to use force if the end could not otherwise have been achieved.

The Supreme Army Command knew only too well that in questions of the return of troops to civil life there were cases of favoritism, which of necessity had the same embittering effects as the shirking at home. Often and often I begged the Ministry of War to put a stop to this.

It was inevitable that, in our difficult position, we had recourse to the occupied territories. The Ministry of War had already tackled this question, and the employment of Belgian workmen in Germany had actually begun. The Supreme Army Command requested the Governor-General to comply with the wishes of the War Ministry and of the industries generally, and did this all the more earnestly because at that time the Government had not met even the army's demands for additional man-power to the extent of passing the Auxiliary Service law.

The conscription of workmen for Germany was in the interest of the Belgians themselves, since the number of unemployed had reached a high figure. This conscription, after discussion with the officials in Berlin, was extended. With these extended enlistments, which at first were carried too far, there were cases of hardship which it would have been better to avoid. They were in the main brought about by the Belgians themselves, who often denounced their fellow-countrymen, for one reason or another, as being out of work, when this was not the case. The Governor-General put a stop to these abuses as soon as he discovered them. In the course of time many Belgian workmen removed to Germany, without any further complaints being heard. We also conscripted Belgian workmen for work in the occupied regions. In the Belgian refugee press and in the Entente propaganda, as was to be expected, there was a mad outcry against this procedure. The fact that similar cries were raised in Germany merely shows a very childish judgment on the war. The military authorities were acting from patriotic duty and not arbitrarily.

We also obtained man-power, although not so much as one might have hoped, from Poland and the other then occupied territories, as well as from those which

we acquired later on. We acted everywhere with the greatest consideration, and avoided any appearance of oppressing foreign populations with the air of a high-handed conqueror; we had too keen a sense of what was due from us, and such conduct was not in accordance with our views.

Prisoners of war were of the utmost importance in all fields of war activity. We could not have kept our economic structure together without the aid of the enormous numbers of Russians taken in the East. Correspondingly, of course, the prisoners taken from us involved, not merely a sensible loss of strength to us, but also an increase in the labor force available to the enemy. Whenever we took prisoners, it had to be decided whether they were to be employed in the occupied districts or to be sent on into Germany. In this respect, too, the greatest consideration was shown to the authorities at home, even when the army was in the greatest need of men.

## II

Side by side with the effort to obtain further manpower from the home country went the preparation of the program for munitions production, for the execution of which a part of the man-power in question was to serve. We needed, above all, more guns, ammunition, and machine guns, and then larger supplies of many other things.

The guns were needed, not only for new arming, but also for changes in arming, to replace older patterns by newer, and finally, too, to take the place of the many worn guns. In the battles of Verdun and the Somme we suffered heavy losses in guns, not merely through enemy shelling, but also by the heavy demands made upon the material by the excessive firing.

Our heavy artillery was well supplied with high-angle guns, but the number of flat trajectory weapons was not so satisfactory, and we accelerated their production, as fire falling well into the back areas had been found very effective, rendering supply and relief to the front lines more difficult, and during actual operations hindering the distribution of orders and the employment of reserves.

The heaviest flat trajectory guns were also increased. His Majesty exerted himself in particular to see that the navy should give up guns from the vessels that were taken out of commission. The heaviest guns had to rely too much on the railway lines, and thus were tied too closely to certain areas. Mechanical transport was brought into more frequent use than before, particularly for ammunition supply.

A gun and a howitzer of longer range were in course of introduction into the field artillery.

It was necessary to decide what number of guns was to be produced monthly in order to cover all requirements. This was a difficult matter. In the case of the heavy artillery we decided correctly, but for the field-artillery we estimated too high. As soon as this was recognized, the demand was reduced; but this of necessity caused a little uncertainty. Factories cannot be rearranged in a day, and each change involves time and a diminution in production. It was thus necessary to exercise the greatest caution in deciding on any new construction. This was the reason why we were not so insistent on the introduction of a special weapon for the infantry as the events proved that we might have been.

For defense against the tanks, field-gun 06, which penetrated the tanks, was sufficient; the only thing necessary was to turn it out in sufficient quantities.

At this time the increased production of ammunition

depended upon the question of explosives, and this in its turn depended upon the possibility of obtaining or manufacturing the necessary materials. Sulphur and nitrogen were particularly important. It was a very difficult task to solve the problem of their supply. We aimed at doubling approximately the previous production. This was gradually reached, in spite of many obstacles, including heavy explosions and shortage of coal. When the explosives program was carried out, steel began to get scarce; in short, we had one trouble after another before we succeeded in increasing the munitions production to the desired point.

A point deserving special attention was the supply of the various sorts of ammunition to the troops. There were too many varieties; it was nothing less than a work of art for battery commanders to estimate their supplies, and for the staffs to get the right supplies up to the right place at the right time. Our fuses were not of satisfactory construction. The pre-war fuses were not simple enough, and it was essential to get the best design. We were considerably hindered by having to go sparingly with supplies of copper and brass, owing to the shortage of supplies. In spite of the efforts of the Artillery Testing Commission, it was a very long time before we had reliable fuses, which worked in such a way as to burst the shell close to the ground at the instant of contact. The shell fragments thus scattered far and wide over the surface of the ground, instead of being buried. We soon abandoned shrapnel, the training of the troops being insufficient for such delicate work. Shells with sensitive fuses were everywhere preferred.

Gas production, too, had to keep pace with the increased output of ammunition. The discharge of gas from cylinders was used less and less, the troops being opposed to it from first to last, and the use of gas-shells

increased correspondingly. Our yellow cross shell was greatly feared by the enemy. The fear of injury from their own gas still remained very strong with our men and did not abate until much later. Privy Councilor Haber rendered valuable service in connection with the conduct of gas fighting.

Smoke shells, too, were now manufactured.

The infantry was supplied with a light machine gun, which might well have been lighter and more simple, for it required too many carriers. It was necessary to come to a decision, however, for the manufacture had to begin; it lasted months and months. Each company of infantry was to receive, at first four, and later six, of these light guns.

Our older heavy machine gun was good, and the men liked it. The artillery was shortly afterward equipped with this for protection against raids and for anti-aircraft work.

The supply of armor-piercing bullets to the infantry for use against aircraft and tanks was increased, and the Ministry of War also undertook the construction of further rapid-fire weapons for the infantry, as well as of weapons of heavier caliber, to render effective aid against tanks.

Great attention had to be bestowed upon the manufacture of motor-lorries. Our horses were getting worse and worse, and remounts came forward slowly. We had to build lorries to replace horse transport, although here, too, we were met with difficulties as to supplies of material. We also needed lorries for carrying troops. The enemy, backed by his enormous industries, found it easier and easier, not merely to move his reserves quickly in lorries, but also to use them on an increasing scale for bringing troops up from billets to the line and taking them back again, thus achieving an important economy of physical and moral



strength. We had to be content if we could find lorries enough for troop movements in cases of the greatest urgency.

The time had not yet come for us to undertake the construction of tanks.

Our aircraft industry took a quite exceptional position. The opposing armies were competing one with another to produce the fastest and fastest-climbing machines. Each passed the other in turn, and our industry was often ahead. Especially in 1918 we had some remarkable designs, to which, together with their own courage, our flying men owed their victories.

In the preceding passages I have dealt merely with some of the more important supplies, in which great increases were necessary, but, in fact, increases in all material were essential. Barbed wire, for example, was as urgently required as small-arm ammunition. To decide the volume of the various materials to be manufactured, one had to weigh one against another and consider their relative importance and the probable future requirements. The whole program constituted a piece of highly difficult brainwork, based on prophecy, for which a great part of the credit is due to Colonel Bauer, of my staff. It was definitely settled only after repeated discussion in Berlin, and received the name of the Hindenburg program, although the program put forward by the Supreme Army Command was not confined to the proposals for munitions production, but included, in addition, a demand for the increase of both our man-power and the maintenance of morale.

It was clear that considerable time would be required for the carrying out of the Hindenburg program; indeed, its very introduction was the cause of disturbance, which for the moment tended rather to reduce than to increase production. There were many

inevitable irritations to overcome. As soon as matters were more or less in order we were met with the difficulty that the factories which in peace-time had been employed in the manufacture of locomotives, and had been altered to work on direct munitions production, had to be restored for locomotive manufacture, our means of communication being by now in need of thorough overhauling. Their munitions manufacture had, of course, to be handed over to other factories, and all works had to be used to the utmost. The increased output demanded extensions of the factories, and this involved time. In other places, works had to be abandoned or amalgamated. The whole constituted a far-reaching interference with our industry, and all the more so as there was much in arrears to catch up.

A good deal of time was bound to elapse before work began on the Hindenburg program, and still longer before the raw material became material of war. The program itself, too, had to be revised and cut down. As things became clearer, it could be seen that the necessary labor for the whole program could not be obtained without endangering the supply of men for the army and navy. At a later stage the view was expressed that the whole program had been a mistake, and that the Supreme Army Command would have been better advised to leave the War Ministry to continue its work as before, merely giving orders to the Ministry. The Field-Marshal and I could, however, deal only with what we found, and that was a shortage of supply and equipment for the army, in spite of the presence of the War Minister at General Headquarters, and of the fact that the shortage was an open secret. Of course, it would have been far better to have had, in place of this sudden expansion of the war works, a systematic switching over, on a scale corresponding to the situation, from peace to war work of all our in-

dustries, either planned in peace-time or, at any rate, consistently carried through in the first two years of the war. The Supreme Army Command, however, had to act in a situation where these ideal conditions were not present. It is always the same. At first nothing adequate is done; the critics object to this, but have no specific details to attack. If something is actually done, if anything is created, even if something is constructed on a really great scale, then there is something for criticism to seize upon. It is easy to be right after the event. Neglect and inactivity are, in truth, however, the most serious crimes; they are worse than any mistakes in action. The Hindenburg program did really become a program, and it achieved more than the other parts of the great scheme, in which we could not intervene.

The factories got really running at last. The Hindenburg program was carried into execution and became a real achievement, thanks to the Munitions Production Office created out of the Ordnance Department. This office was under the control of General Coupette, who was especially concerned with technical and industrial questions; he had the co-operation of his two important and powerful seconds-in-command, Major Stadlaender and Colonel Wurtzbacher. The army knows well what it owes to this office and to the men at the head of it.

Our industry kept our fighting forces supported; it must always have the honor and credit of that. When it was once informed what demands were to be made upon it, it went to work of its own accord to fulfil its task and gave ever better and better results. That it insured to itself a correspondingly good reward from the Government was only reasonable, in view of the great risk and the large capital outlay involved in fulfilling our demands; just as reasonable, in fact, as

the workers' desire for good wages. I opposed, if only in the soldiers' interests, all extravagance and selfishness. It was the duty of the Government to insure by all necessary measures that our economic position was not made any worse by the enormous demands of the Hindenburg program. Taxation could serve only as a partial remedy. Profiteering was the deadliest sin, and our inability to eradicate it was a matter of the greatest regret to me from the point of view of morale at home and in the field. Many times I made an effort to get to the bottom of it. The war profiteer is a loathsome phenomenon, and he and the corruption of his influence have done us incalculable harm.

On the suggestion of the Supreme Army Command, changes had meanwhile been made in the Ministry of War.

A "War Office" was established as the central office for the control of all branches of the work of the war. In this the replacement and labor departments worked out questions of man-power, the raw-material department attended to supplies of material, and the above-mentioned Munitions Production Office looked after manufactures. The hopes which I placed in the War Office for obtaining all the available man-power were not fulfilled. Even this office seemed to look at all such questions from the point of view of domestic politics, instead of placing before everything the needs of the war. I had also hoped that it would succeed in bringing employers and workmen nearer together, for the desire for *rapprochement* was present in many quarters.

The problem of manufacture would have been much simpler if the War Office had been given control from the start of all war work, including therein pioneers' tools, motor-lorries, and aircraft. This was not properly done.

Efforts were also made in the occupied territories and in Poland and Belgium to stimulate war work. This was possible only to a limited extent, owing to the fluctuations in the war position with which we had to reckon and the shortage of labor. There were also at times other difficulties. For example, the Belgian workmen in the huge small-arms industries of the Liège district were ready to work only if they received an assurance that the weapons they manufactured would not be used by German troops on the Western front. This assurance could not be given.

We were thus compelled to remove from many places the machinery which was suitable for war purposes and transport it to Germany, where it could be put to useful ends.

### III

The obtaining and distribution of raw materials in Germany was intrusted to the safe hands of Colonel Koeth, who in his department worked with the genius proper to the Great War. He achieved great things in the direction of getting materials out of the occupied territories. The supply of materials from neutral and allied countries was in the control of a special department of the Prussian Ministry of War, with which Colonel Koeth worked in close liaison. Coal and rolling-stock were not within the scope of his department.

Colonel Koeth gave the army all that it urgently needed, and with regard to our dependence on foreign countries, nothing more could be done. The supply of raw material was insured far ahead. The people, however, suffered considerably. Clothing and footwear were very short. Prices ran terribly high, gravely increasing the cost of living and all the difficulties associated with it. This caused me anxiety. The Supreme Army Command, in the interests of the efficient conduct of

the war, could not tolerate it, and made many appeals on the point to the Government, unfortunately without success.

Our dependence upon foreign countries had grave effects, and I attached great importance to the production of substitute textile fibers. I instructed Lieutenant-Colonel Schmidt-Reder to investigate the matter. He put himself into touch with the various Government offices and with the textile industry, and he is mainly responsible for such success as was achieved. I hope that his industry will bring benefit to his country. It may be an incalculable blessing for the German people if they learn how to grow for themselves the products hitherto imported from abroad.

To obtain the various raw materials a large number of semi-official companies were established. I was not in a position to judge whether and to what extent they were necessary, but it is quite clear that in operation they were productive of infinite friction.

The question of transportation lay at the root of all questions of keeping up the fight at home. This question, in its turn, depended upon locomotives, wagons, and staff, and was closely bound up with the coal-supply. Minister von Breitenbach sacrificed a great deal in every direction for the needs of the army. Both personnel and material were strained to the utmost, and the locomotives, in particular, were ill used. In the first place, matters were improved somewhat by returning factories to the work of locomotive and wagon construction. The Supreme Army Command also helped the Minister of Public Works in other ways, even, although with great reluctance, by releasing men to such an extent as to weaken the army. This was, however, unavoidable, for it was essential to give some relief to the railway workers. In many respects we had prepared for a short war, and in this and other

matters had to reshape ourselves to meet a long one. Military demands on the railways at home still remained very high. We had seized all of the Belgian locomotives, and also certain engines and wagons in North France, but these were not nearly enough. The material taken in Russia could not be used, owing to the difference of gage.

Our allies also laid great burdens upon our stock of engines and wagons. On the Austro-Hungarian railways there were many hundred German locomotives and some ten thousand German wagons. Bulgaria and Turkey, too, received both men and material from us. We had just recently captured material in Rumania, but the enemy had, on the other hand, taken several thousand German wagons to Moldavia and kept them there. The occupied districts, with their long lines, required an army of railwaymen, and material in corresponding scale.

The Supreme Army Command, through the Director of Railways, made a series of proposals to the Minister for procuring greater moderation in the use of material at home, as, *e.g.*, by the limitation of traffic. Similar steps were taken in the occupied districts. The limitations, which were impracticable, and, indeed, impossible of full realization under the then conditions, had ultimately to be carried into effect under the oppressive armistice conditions and the revolution. It may be realized how strained the transport situation was at this time when I state that powder and explosive factories, on which everything depended, were at a standstill for days on end. There was coal to be had, but the railways could not bring it to them. Things became so bad that I had to have daily reports on the supplies to the powder-factories.

The Director of Railways, Colonel von Oldershausen, and his second-in-command, Major von Stockhausen,

set themselves to their exacting office with the greatest intelligence. They remained throughout in the closest touch with the military directors of railways of the allied countries and with the transport Ministers of the German states. The existence of the various German railway administrations made the problem essentially more difficult. We suffered for not having achieved greater unity prior to the war, and for not having insisted on all the states keeping to the same standards. Bavaria, for example, had considerably fewer heavy locomotives per kilometer than Prussia, and the spare parts required by the two countries were different. A great deal could have been done to improve matters without any alteration of the Imperial constitution.

Transport difficulties were also increased by the fact that there was no unity of controller management of canal and river navigation. Up to this time it had not been developed in accordance with what was urgently necessary, and these arrears had to be made good. A special inland water transport department was established, and at my request the Admiralty assisted us by recruiting the necessary men.

Transport conditions, which had been very bad in the winter of 1916-17, improved later. They were severely strained in the winter of 1917-18, but not so badly as in the spring. The Minister of Labor, for his part, made every effort to do whatever was necessary to meet the situation.

Coal and iron are the basis of all war industry. We were able to improve our position considerably, even in our dealings with the neutrals, by means of the Longwy and Briey basin, the Belgian coal-fields, and parts of the coal areas of northern France and of Poland, which last we managed jointly with Austria-Hungary. We began to develop coal in northeast Serbia, and attempted to stimulate Turkey to make a



better use of her deposits. We gave our allies coal, and received in return nothing but lignite from Austria-Hungary for Saxony and Bavaria. In return for coal and iron, neutral countries gave us, among other things, foodstuffs and money to improve our exchange, besides horses. Thus did coal and iron show their power.

The shortage of coal at home became considerably more acute in the winter of 1916-17. It had a serious effect on the morale, and called for strong measures. The coal-supply in Germany was not properly controlled, and output had fallen. As I have already explained, I proposed to the Chancellor in February 1917 the appointment of a special Coal Commissioner. Mining Privy Councilor Stutz was the first person who succeeded in bringing order into the coal question, or, at any rate, in overcoming the greatest causes of friction, and achieving a fair compromise between the demands for coal for domestic fuel, for light and power, for agriculture and industry, for the railways and the navy. I found it very difficult in May and June 1917, when still suffering from the great impression made upon me by the great Entente offensive in the West and the extraordinary losses which this caused us, to weaken the army further by releasing fifty thousand workmen at his request. This should be remembered while reading the history of that period. I must emphasize once more the fact that such a weakening of the army laid upon the Supreme Army Command a greater duty than ever to the men in the fighting line, to continue incessantly pressing for the increase of labor output and the better employment of man-power in Germany. The army never recovered the men thus released, and labor output even fell off considerably. That was, of course, a heavy blow to us.

Iron was not so plentiful as coal. It was difficult to turn out sufficient quantities of steel, especially of hard

steel. We obtained large quantities of iron ore from Sweden, and even the ores at Poti in trans-Caucasia were of vital importance to us. Scrap, too, was needed for steel production. We removed it from the occupied districts in large quantities. Many a factory building had to be sacrificed to our war industry, under the pressure of the blockade and the necessities of the war, in order to furnish old iron for the steel of our weapons and ammunition. The output of steel gradually became sufficient. Then the steel had to be distributed for the various manufactures—*i.e.*, for guns, ammunition, barbed wire, and, in particular, the ration destined for the improvement of the railways had to be cut down.

Besides coal, iron, and steel, the material for submarines, lorries and aircraft, and lubricants, created some of our gravest problems. For lubricants we had to rely upon Austria-Hungary and Rumania. As the former country could not supply enough oil, and every effort for sufficient increases in her output failed, the Rumanian oil was of decisive importance. But even when we had this source, the question of rolling-stock remained very serious and impeded both the carrying on of the war and life at home. In 1918 the stocks in the Caucasus promised better times. In our economic condition then, our home production of benzol could not be substantially increased. Besides, benzol was not suitable for submarines and aircraft. When, toward the end of the war, we did decide to supply benzol for our aircraft, this was done solely on account of the shortage of petrol and in the face of the certainty that we were thereby reducing the fighting capacity of our airmen and increasing the dangers to which they were exposed. Both stocks and consumption required constant supervision. The employment of automobiles had to be limited more than ever, and

even that of motor-lorries in quiet periods, in order to be able to make full use of them at critical times. I could not claim any better supplies for the army.

The shortage of oil at home was serious. The country districts did not obtain sufficient for the winter. The peasants had to pass the long winter evenings in the dark, which was very bad for their spirits. It is characteristic of Germany that little was ever said about this great inconvenience. For a time some of our transport difficulties were due to the bad lubricants used on the locomotives, which froze very easily. Private automobiles were practically not used at all in Germany. The whole rolling-stock situation was one of the greatest anxiety and called for incessant watching. It was not until the autumn of 1918 that I achieved my desire that the supplies for the army and the navy should be under the same control. The supply of material for the army and at home was already under one and the same authority—that of the Director of Mechanical Transport.

The Supreme Army Command constantly urged the importance of taking every step necessary for the production of substitute materials, but many inevitable natural difficulties stood in the way.

The raw materials for trench warfare, timber and rubble, were drawn in increasing proportions from the occupied territories, but Germany too had to send large quantities.

In questions of raw material, I could busy myself only with the general underlying problems. But even these demanded a thorough study, and I had to keep myself constantly *au courant* of the matter, in order properly to deal with isolated questions of vital importance that came up for decision.

In such a war it was inevitable that the occupied territories would have to supply raw materials. Firm-

ness gradually achieved a great deal in this direction. The Supreme Army Command asked the Provisional Governments in Poland and Belgium to assist in this direction. In all essentials, the same principles were followed in all the territories. It is obvious that this involved hardship for the local populations, but equally obvious that these steps had to be taken.

Every intelligent person will admit that in many cases we might have acted in more practical fashion. The task was, however, at once novel and peculiarly difficult to grasp, owing to the changing needs of the war. In spite of all our needs, we acted with a leniency that was carried almost too far when compared with the extreme steps taken at home. Germany had to surrender her church-bells, but, on a suggestion made by Chancellor von Hertling to His Majesty, Belgium was allowed to retain hers.

The occupied territories were of great help to us both at the front and at home. The getting of materials from these districts employed large bodies of men, just as war work at home did, but we had to make this sacrifice to live.

Our allies were induced by the Ministry of War to take their part in supplying Germany with raw materials, mainly for the manufacture of, or else in payment for, the munitions supplied to them by us. The Ministry also managed the copper-mines at Bor in northeastern Serbia, which were of the greatest help. The Supreme Army Command was called in to help only when Turkey or Bulgaria, in accordance with the old traditions, were behindhand in delivery of materials and required some stimulus to make them fulfil their undertakings.

In the problem of supplying materials for the army, German scientists, many thanks to them, helped us with all their formidable powers.

In all questions relating to the increase of our strength at home I was strongly supported by Colonel Bauer and Major von Harbou. They worked in exemplary fashion.

## IV

The question of food-supplies was of equal importance to the people and the army, to man and beast.

The work of the army in the field depended in a high degree upon their rations. That and leave are the two decisive matters in morale. I thus had to give to the question of food my full attention.

The reduction in morale at home was equally due to the food situation. The human body did not receive, especially in albumen and fats, the necessary nourishment for the maintenance of physical and mental vigor. In wide circles a certain decay of bodily and mental power of resistance was to be seen, producing an unmanly and hysterical attitude which enabled enemy propaganda to encourage the pacifist leanings of many Germans. In the summer of 1917 my first glimpse into this situation startled me considerably. This attitude was a tremendous element of weakness. It was all a question of human nature. It could be eliminated to some extent by strong patriotic feeling, but in the long run could be finally defeated only by an improvement in nourishment. More food was needed. We had to find new sources of supply, to conserve our stocks, and, above all, to increase our own production. This last was the most important.

The occupation of Wallachia was a definite step. Other measures were needed to assist further. The need for the employment of straw and timber for fodder, and perhaps even for human food, was constantly insisted upon by the Supreme Army Command, as was the gathering of leaf-hay for fodder. Just as we had to

get every ounce of strength out of the people to carry on the war, so we had, with the assistance of our scientists, to win everything from nature that could be worked up into food for man and beast.

The necessity for preserving foodstuffs from spoiling led, among other steps, to potato-drying, of which I was strongly in favor.

For the increase in agricultural production supplies of artificial manures in sufficient quantities and at reasonable prices were essential.

The Supreme Army Command took every step to secure these supplies, which were all the more important, as natural manure became shorter in supply owing to the reduced stocks of animals and the shortage of straw, and also as intensive cultivation increased. We obtained the necessary phosphates from the occupied territories of northern France and Belgium, and were constantly urging on the Chancellor and the Treasury the necessity for extending the artificial nitrogen factories.

The question of prices was a matter for the home authorities. It was complicated by political considerations. In the then conditions of socialist agitation against the country generally and the agrarian party, who were raising the price of bread against the poor, and of the already serious difficulties of living, the Government lacked the courage to take the long view and regulate the maximum prices adequately. Agriculture, suffering from very high costs of production, and faced by the need to prepare for carrying on after the war, was often quite incapable of working profitably on the basis of the then maximum prices. Supplies were not sufficient for the population, and the low prices did not even insure that they were all brought to market. The non-expert bodies, whose duty it was to see that all stocks were delivered,

were incapable of doing so. They often irritated and estranged the country people. The individual did not even receive his official ration, which of itself was fixed too low to maintain his full strength. As a result, both town and country set about to help themselves. Illicit trading and hoarding increased and there was soon no sure ground to be seen in the problem.

Producers kept sufficient supplies for themselves, and more besides, and even if their whole consumption was of little importance when spread over the whole population, their conduct was bound to embitter feeling.

The great mass of the people, especially the middle class, including officials and officers with fixed salaries, suffered real hardship. A few, no doubt, succumbed to temptation in the difficult times, and helped themselves, but the majority were literally starved. This came as an additional burden over and above all the other difficulties suffered by the middle classes. And yet this class, oppressed in every direction and suffering silently, did its duty to the very end.

The workmen were better looked after. They adjusted their demands for increased wages, which they supported by striking, to the illicit trading prices. True, an appreciable number of the working-classes also suffered hardship, but, in contrast to the middle classes, they really had enough to live on.

Illicit trading became of the most serious importance in domestic politics. It grew with the length of the war. The more people at home lost interest in the war the more their natural instincts, having now no opposing force, pressed them more strongly forward. Illicit trading and hoarding took continually more and more disgusting forms, and these and the declining morale interacted on one another with increasingly disastrous results. Our system of control with maxi-

imum prices had failed. Production did not increase, and yield fell off, through shortage of labor, lack of manure, and bad weather. The many suggestions which the Supreme Army Command made to the Chancellor for combating illicit trading, extravagant middlemen's profits, and high wages, which had to be defeated if we were to maintain our capacity to fight, met with no response.

The whole thing was a farce. The fear lest the maximum prices for agricultural produce should be fixed too high actually contributed greatly to increasing the general cost of living and widening the gulf between town and country. The discontented elements knew how to make capital out of all these occurrences. Our enemies' starvation blockade triumphed and caused us both physical and spiritual distress.

My own view of the system of control was that the sooner it was removed, and free trading again permitted, the better; in respect to certain articles of food, even, I thought it should be removed at once. On the other hand, my view was that a wide development of co-operative societies and unions of producers, as auxiliaries of the Government, was urgently required. These were, however, not yet sufficiently established in all districts. It was, above all, important that the prices for various products should be raised and should be fixed early enough to enable farmers to make their arrangements accordingly. The commissariat chief, who shared my views, put them energetically before the War Food Office. It would seem that England, with her system of minimum prices, chose the better course, for her production certainly increased enormously.

The farmers worked well. The large owners in particular achieved wonders. The country has again been able to see that, just as the army is the basis of order, so our agriculture is the foundation of our economic,



indeed, even of our political, life. If we had only borne this in mind before the war, our way would have been easier. It is now the foremost duty of the State to make good what was then neglected, and that of our agriculture to promote intensive cultivation.

I had many confidential discussions with both the presidents of our War Food Office, Von Batocki and Von Waldow. Different as they were from each other, they were both full of the sense of their grave responsibility, of iron loyalty, and deep patriotism.

The army often helped the people. With the heavy duties they had to undertake, the troops were no better off than the men at home. I acted throughout with the deep conviction that the army and the people in all respects were the same. The Supreme Army Command, indeed, always acted on that principle. In Berlin people seemed at times to have the idea that the army and the people were two different bodies, with different stomachs. This view was a sorry demonstration of how little the war was understood at home. Very reluctantly the Supreme Army Command had often to reduce temporarily the rations of meat, bread, potatoes, and fats, and also of oats and hay. This was done to support the people at home and keep them fit for the war. The War Food Office, however, thoroughly understood the army's needs, and especially the fact that the men in the front line were deserving of the greatest consideration.

The men often did not have enough, even when they received the full allotted ration. The food was, besides, too monotonous. I heard many complaints from the Commander-in-chief on this point, but I could not remedy any matters in detail. At home, the troops in depots did not get enough to eat, and many difficulties arose.

Luxuries became rarer and rarer

The horses in particular suffered, their rations being wholly insufficient. Their corn ration was too small, and great difficulties were experienced with their other fodder.

The commissariat had, at the beginning of the war, to combat many difficulties, due to its peace organization, and had insufficient personnel. At a later stage it was fully equal to its responsible work. Its devoted and self-sacrificing work was of great service both to the command and to the men.

Liaison was always good between the departments of the Supreme Army Command and the director of the administration department of the Ministry of War, General von Oven, who fought with me at Liège, and between the command and the War Food Office. There was mutual give and take. The sins of omission of the pre-war period, however, the insufficient economic preparation for the war, and the failure to accumulate stocks of all necessary supplies before it began, were not susceptible of remedy.

In the later period of the war we helped the civilian authorities in their supply problems with motor-lorries and also by requisitioning wagons, and in particular in distribution from the stations of the larger towns. We had to put up with the difficulties thereby caused by the army. Harvest leave was given far beyond the usual numbers. The potato-supply at home was helped by reducing the requisition of railway wagons.

The occupied territories helped us with foodstuffs. The lines-of-communication inspectorate drew on them in particular for meat, and saw to it that their agriculture was carried on along the best lines. Wherever troops were stationed for any length of time they themselves worked hard both in cultivating and harvesting; but frequent movements prevented us from gaining much benefit from this. In the year 1917 only

Rumania enabled Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Constantinople to keep their heads above water.

The measures taken by the Entente relieved us of anxiety as to the feeding of Belgium.

We obtained substantial supplies from neutral countries, and in particular from Denmark, Holland, and Switzerland. In our purchases we acted through a special German company, and did not deal, like the Entente, with the inhabitants of the country in question, allowing them to make a profit. Rightly or wrongly, this caused considerable discontent and indignation among our allies and the neutrals, and ultimately also at home.

The food situation in Austria-Hungary was always exceedingly strained. Hungary had enough. I did, it is true, undertake the supply of a very considerable part of the army, but it gave no assistance to starving Austria. In the latter country the Czech farmers refused to supply the more scantily supplied districts inhabited by Germans. The clumsy Austrian system of government created additional difficulties, so that, in spite of orders of Draconian severity, there was never any real hope of procuring the necessary supplies or of distributing them properly. I shall never forget the way in which a high Austrian official begged me to help him against Hungary in the question of supplies. The army starved in part, as did German Austria, and especially Vienna.

Although agriculture was very primitive, the situation in Bulgaria was better, but the system of government was rotten, control on the lines of communication was bad, and the army supplies were managed on antiquated lines. The army often ran short of supplies. It was, nevertheless, possible to hope that Bulgaria would be self-providing in the long run.

The Turkish supply system was absolutely rotten,

its agriculture was the most primitive possible, even iron plows being unknown. Our Minister of Agriculture, Baron von Schorlemer, had made efforts to improve Turkish agriculture, but the Government displayed not the least understanding or perception in the matter. It asked for motor plows to bring more land under cultivation, but never dreamed of taking proper steps to increase production. Turkey, especially Constantinople, was thus in need of help in supplies.

In the autumn of 1916 the idea was mooted of establishing a central supply office for the Quadruple Alliance, under German control. It was a specious suggestion, but supply in the four countries really depended upon wholly different considerations and could never have been managed on the same principles. In the end they would all have lived on Germany. The idea was quite rightly abandoned.

## V

The great importance of Rumania, or, more correctly, of Wallachia, has already been noticed in various connections. We had now the task of collecting from this territory what we needed, and of transporting it to the consumers. Rumania and the Dobrudja were put under a regular government. Having regard for the predominant part which we Germans had taken in the conquest of the country, I strove to have this government placed in German hands. In view of the peculiarities of our allies and their business methods, this certainly offered the best guaranty for the permanent proper consideration of our rights and interests, and our allies agreed to the course proposed.

A definite settlement of the Bulgars in the whole of the Dobrudja was not in our interests. That portion

which was originally Bulgar, having only been ceded to Rumania after the second Balkan War, was immediately resumed by them, in accordance with the treaty of the autumn of 1915. It was thus settled with for the time being. In the then position of the world, handing over to Bulgaria the rest of the Dobrudja, including the line from Cernavoda to Constanza, would have been equivalent to handing over the third and last trade route from Central Europe to Turkey, which already controlled the routes *via* Salonika and Sofia. This monopoly would be bound to have a bad effect upon our trade with Turkey, which suffered enough through the selfish attitude of Austria-Hungary. In the Dobrudja the interests of Germany were identical with those of Turkey and Austria. Nevertheless, Vienna in all Bulgarian questions took a very ambiguous attitude toward us. It was thus uncertain what position would be adopted by the Austrian headquarters. My intentions ran to a certain extent counter to Bulgaria's interests. I had, meanwhile, the satisfaction that all the allies agreed to the establishment of German control over the lines of communication in the Dobrudja. This was placed under the command of General von Mackensen, and covered the district from the southern frontier of the former Rumanian Dobrudja to a line some twenty kilometers north of the Cernavoda-Constanza line. The rest of the Dobrudja fell within the army zone of the Third Bulgarian Army and thus lay under Bulgar control.

The Bulgars soon caused considerable difficulties to the German authorities in the Dobrudja, who were under the command of Gen. Kurt von Unger. The matter was even brought before the Supreme Army Command. I stood firm against the Bulgarian desire to control the lines of communication, and was greatly strengthened by the attitude of the German

officials, who fought with spirit against the selfish actions of our allies. The administration of the district was bound to suffer from this friction, but General von Unger and his German subordinates saw to it that the rich oil stocks at Constanza and the other materials were transported out of the district, and thus were put to the use that really lay in the interests of ourselves and our allies. The land was cultivated as well as was possible in the difficult circumstances. If the Bulgar troops did not receive the supplies from the Dobrudja that it could have yielded, the fault lay solely with the attitude adopted by them and their Government.

The population in this district enjoyed our protection until toward the end of the war. The complete surrender of the southern part thereof to Bulgaria under the Peace of Bucharest was not further carried out.

We had reserved the right to buy materials in the army zone of the Third Bulgar Army. The Bulgars felt themselves injured by this and put many difficulties into our way.

The administration set up in Wallachia contained a strong Austrian element, which was naturally far from convenient. We had, however, to put up with this on the simple ground that Germany had not the strength to carry out everything herself. In many cases the Austro-Hungarian officials made our life a burden; they feared an increase of German influence in Rumania, and sought to obtain for themselves advantages of every description. Bulgaria, too, made the administration more difficult, acting at first in a most arbitrary manner. Turkey was loyal.

The administration was called "military"; it was under Field-Marshal von Mackensen, and thus also under the Supreme Army Command, and not directly under His Majesty, as were the Governments of Belgium

and Poland; the influence of the Foreign Office could be traced in this. The military governor was Gen. Tülf von Tschepe und Weidenbach, who had previously administered, in 1915, the then occupied parts of Poland, so far as they were not in the army zones. His second-in-command was at first General von Bergmann, and later Colonel Hentsch, who during the Rumanian campaign had been Quartermaster-General of Von Mackensen's staff and had a fine grasp of administrative and economic problems.

Under the military governors were German and Austrian lines-of-communication commandants.

The military government did not cover the whole of Wallachia, a narrow strip remaining part of the lines-of-communication and army zone of the Ninth and the Danube Armies. The whole district was, however, administered on the same principles.

The Rumanian officials and judges had for the most part remained at their posts, and those that had fled could be replaced by other Rumanians. The administrative problems were thus simpler than those that had previously confronted the Commander-in-chief on the Eastern front, and were mainly economic. These were, of course, of the utmost importance. The appointment of the military governor's staff and the selection of lines-of-communication commandants were made with an eye to this circumstance.

There were highly satisfactory supplies of agricultural produce of all sorts, in particular of wheat and maize, but also of pease, beans, plums, eggs, and wine. The autumn sowing was undertaken at once. Everything was done to encourage production. The sowing of winter wheat was most important, as we had to reckon on the Rumanian harvest for the critical period before the Hungarian harvest in July and our own in August. Vegetables were also of importance to us,

and their production was made as profitable as possible. The stocks of cattle had been greatly reduced by the war, and those that remained were now used for draft. The export of meat was thus confined to very moderate limits.

In obtaining the products of Rumania the military administration worked with the officials of the Central Purchasing Company, which had been active in Rumania before that country entered the war. Its independent attitude did not, however, meet with approval.

The stocks of oil that we found in Rumania were not large. The boring-plant had been absolutely destroyed and the wells very cleverly blocked up. The English Colonel Thomsen had fulfilled admirably his duty of making it difficult for us to exploit the oil-fields. His work was not, it is true, of decisive assistance to the Entente, but it did materially reduce the supplies of our army and home. We must attribute our shortage in part to him. The military administration brought in men acquainted with the Rumanian oil industry, and applied itself energetically to its second most important task, the restoration of the oil output, both by repairing blocked wells and by new borings, and by the re-establishment and resumption of working of the refineries. The output increased, although very slowly.

To many people in Vienna, suffering severe privation and not well disposed toward us, it seemed that we were not proceeding quickly enough with the gathering of the harvests and the resumption of oil working, and in February 1917 complaints came from Vienna and were repeated to me from Berlin. I was uncertain for a moment whether the work was really being well done. I was, however, able to judge of the difficulties to be overcome in Rumania from my own experiences in Kovno, and I did not let myself be deceived. In April



the complaints ceased, and the Government was generally approved.

The distribution of the stocks from the Dobrudja and Wallachia was carried out in accordance with special agreements with the allies. There was no great difficulty in settling on a basis for the distribution of the oil, but the sharing of the agricultural products of Wallachia was one of the most unpleasant tasks of the Quartermaster-General, General Hahndorff, whose clear idea and wide understanding of war economics made him particularly suited for the task. Bulgaria stood aside from the distribution of the Rumanian stocks, as she was receiving the Dobrudja harvest. Turkey received only a small quantity, having been allotted advances from the large stocks lying in the Dobrudja. The real question was thus one of an arrangement between Germany and Austria-Hungary, or, more correctly, Austria alone. The Austrian negotiators made huge demands. We took a leaf from their book and made equally large claims. The happy medium proved here, too, after bitter discussions, to be the way to agreement, and ultimately to satisfaction on both sides. Of course, representatives of our War Food Office were brought into the negotiations, and the general lines of our case were settled in advance in discussion with them. The Supreme Army Command needed to intervene only in especially critical decisions.

For the transport of oil, corn, etc., it was in general possible to re-establish the communications which had served the export from Wallachia before Rumania entered the war. The Rumanian railways were restored for this purpose, which took a certain time. The Danube navigation was recommenced at once. Austria-Hungary regarded the Danube as its exclusive province, but Colonel von Oldershausen established our interests in the navigation. The German Danube

Shipping Company, the Bavarian Lloyd, increased its activities.

Our transport arrangements always fulfilled the demands made upon them. The expected increase in oil exports was prepared for in advance by increased construction of tank wagons and tank ships. A pipe line was laid from Ploesti to Giurgiu; in peace-time it had probably never been completely laid.

Just as previously in the district of the Commander-in-chief in the East, so here in Rumania, also, all German officials connected with Wallachia were fully conscious, not only of the vital importance of their work for the prosecution of the war, but also, as we all hoped, of the advantage which it would be to their country when peace came.

## VI

The German people, at home and in the line, have suffered and endured much in the four long years of war. The war has deeply disturbed and injured the sentiments of the people and the whole national morale.

The blockade of extermination and starvation and the enemy propaganda which have operated in close association in the fight against the German race and the German people were a heavy burden, and a burden that grew ever heavier as the war lasted. The blockade worked successfully. Propaganda, which had found fruitful soil at home, now turned its attention directly to the men at the front, who also were now receptive. Blockade and propaganda began gradually to undermine our spirits and to shake the belief in ultimate victory. The eminently justified longing for peace began to assume forms that bordered on weakness, dividing the people and depressing the morale of the army.

Poisonous weeds grew in this soil. All German sentiment, all patriotism, died in many breasts. The ego came to the front. The war profiteer of every variety, not excluding the political type, which took advantage of the country's danger and the Government's weakness to snatch political and personal advantages, spread wider and wider. [Our spiritual capacity to continue was incalculably weakened. We lost confidence in ourselves.

The idea of revolution, preached by enemy propaganda and by the Bolsheviks, found the Germans in a receptive frame of mind, and gained ground in the army and navy through the Independent Socialists. Heresy grew among the masses of our people. The German people, at home and at the front, had received their death-blow.

When I was appointed Quartermaster-General Germany was just at the beginning of this development, and its future course could not be prophesied. One thing, however, was absolutely certain—that we could not watch it as idle spectators.

Something had now been achieved against the starvation blockade; we had broken through it in Rumania. Nobody knew whether we would ever have another chance to break through, or how we would use it.

Before the enemy propaganda we were like a rabbit before a snake. It was exceptionally clever and worked on a very large scale. Its suggestions had a strong effect on the masses; it worked well together with the actual campaigning, and was unscrupulous as to the means it used.

The German people, who had not yet learned the art or the value of silence, had, in their blameworthy frankness, shown by their speech, their writings, and their actions the best line of attack for the enemy propaganda.

The German people had themselves coined the phrase "Prussian militarism," although this very Prussian militarism, the spirit of selfless loyalty, the surrender of the individual to the conception of the State, had created Prussia and achieved for Germany its magnificent development. People mistook unessential phenomena for the essence of militarism, and failed to appreciate the national strength which rested therein. It should not have been resisted, but encouraged. Even high officials of the Government used the word reproachfully to me during the war, so that one can hardly blame the many who thought they were acting wisely in turning against "militarism," even if they could not tell clearly the meaning of the word. True, many a man knew full well what the end of such a fight was; authority was at stake.

The Entente knew quite well the strength of this "Prussian militarism." It knew why it fought against it. It knew, too, what it was doing when it stirred up the Germans against their officers, in the last resort the supporters of the power of the State. It acted with sure aim when it worked against Prussia in South Germany, when it attacked the Emperor, the symbol of our unity, when it railed against the Crown Prince and promised our people the riches of heaven if it should once get rid of its Imperial house and its other dynasties.

Later on the enemy propaganda attacked me also. The army and the people were to be robbed of their confidence in the Supreme Army Command, the belief in ultimate victory was to be shattered, and faith was to be destroyed in the man who strove to oppose strong resistance to the Entente.

By working on our democratic sentiments the enemy propaganda succeeded in bringing our form of government into discredit in Germany and in the whole world as being autocratic, although our Emperor had

not the same power as the President of the United States, and although the right of voting for the Reichstag, the great representative body of the Empire, rested on a more democratic basis than that of many other countries.

The enemy propaganda aimed ever more directly at breaking up the unity of the German Empire and at separating Germany from her ruling house and her dynasties and governments from their people; this was revolution pure and simple.

The propagandists were clever in understanding the effects of such phrases as "peace of understanding," "disarmament after the war," "league of nations," and so on, on the peaceful and unpolitical German people, only too ready to follow, in conscious or unconscious self-deception, this attractive but deceptive phantasm.

In this connection the propagandists' story that the peace of the world had been disturbed by German plans of world dominion fell, too, on fruitful soil.

In plain fact the German Government in the post-Bismarck period had had no great political aim whatever beyond the maintenance of peace save, perhaps, that it aimed at increasing the colonial possessions of the country. It scarcely thought of world politics or policy; it had no clear conception why it made its way to Bagdad. Living as we have done since 1870-71 a life of constant preference of the apparent over the real, of judging by externals, we have no doubt overestimated our own strength and thought too little of the forces that were working against us. We spread out over the world without having a firm footing in Europe. After gaining Alsace-Lorraine and establishing the Empire, the German people were satisfied in Europe. Increase of our colonial possessions, and the securing of a better position in the world by the

widening of our markets, had become a necessity for us. This was, however, to be obtained only by force. Our people, on the other hand, aimed at an equal place in peaceful competition. Preoccupied with business and political doctrines, our people did not know that other peoples would find it difficult to distinguish this peaceful aim from the desire for world mastery.

The maintenance of peace was a great object. Just as we could win a war of defense only by attacking, so we could keep peace only by clear and strong policy, carried on on well-defined principles. This our politics did not succeed in doing. It expressed itself unexpectedly, clumsily. The peoples who were ill disposed to us took advantage of this to form a combine against us. Even those who had hitherto been opposed to one another combined against us. In other ways we showed ourselves uncertain and irresolute, and this, too, brought us no friends.

Many Germans felt grave anxiety in this position and gave sharp expression to their fears in all directions. In contrast to their Government, they had far-seeing ideas. These utterances were, however, merely those of private persons, and had no more importance or meaning for us than corresponding statements had in other countries. This habit of speaking out was not changed during the war. The war aims of the Governments and peoples of the Entente were always more far-reaching than the dreams of individual Germans. We know this now to our cost.

Plans for world dominion demand a strong national feeling. This, in spite of the foundation of the Empire in 1871, we have never achieved. Our Government in the post-Bismarck period did nothing to cultivate it. On the contrary, we lost it as we lost our strength of will. In our political thought we have remained too "federal," and have retained too deep in-

ternal political divisions. We came into the world too soon, without any national sentiment, and in our sense of world citizenship, born of foreign influences, we have never found the true level between thinking nationally and thinking internationally, between our domestic and our external interests.

Contrary to the arguments or the enemy propaganda, no dreams of world mastery, no "nationalism" of the German Government, endangered the peace before 1914 or have prevented its conclusion during the war. After all, propaganda did not set out to tell the truth, but merely to break down the determination and the fighting spirit of the German people and to spread views that would serve its own ends.

At last it found the catchword of the "right of self-determination." A problem seemingly based on a most acceptable truism, but, in truth, not to be solved without oppression, when, as is so often the case, nationalities are mixed. The phrase fitted the case of Austria-Hungary better than it fitted us, but it also had its effect upon Germany and, in the long run, in the interpretation given to it by fear and hatred, it was destined to work us grave injury through the construction given to it by Germans.

In the last stages of the war, and quite openly from the beginning of 1918 onward, propaganda worked ever more clearly for the social revolution, side by side with the political revolution. The war was painted as being waged by the upper ten thousand at the expense of the workers, and the victory of Germany as the workers' misfortune.

The enemy propaganda, and Bolshevism, which aimed at a world revolution, were working for the same ends in Germany. England gave China opium, our enemies gave us the revolution, and we accepted the poison and distributed it, as the Chinese distribute opium.

While the enemy propaganda was doing increasing harm to the German people and the army and navy, it also succeeded in maintaining the determination to fight in its own countries and armies, and in working against us in neutral countries.

Responsibility for the war, the Belgian atrocities, the ill-treatment of prisoners, our political immorality and treachery, our mendacity and brutality, the arbitrary Government of Prussianized Germany, the enslavement of the German people, all these reproaches were cleverly invented, for the purposes of the campaign of lies against us and had the greatest effect all over the world. Side by side with these, the catchwords of the fight for democracy against militarism, autocracy, and the *Junker*, of the war for civilization and for the freedom of the smaller nations, and other phrases of the sort in ideal guise, of infinite effect upon men who do not see too clearly. The public opinion of the world was within their power. For the American soldiers the war became, as it were, a crusade against us.

In the neutral countries we were subjected to a sort of moral blockade. The way to the soul of the neutrals was barred to us. We had not the means to open it. We alone did wrong; everything that the Entente did was morally right and the obvious course to follow. Germany was the world oppressor, and the policy of the Entente, and that alone, was pursuing true moral aims, at once freeing the world and making it happier. In neutral countries, which now must know the truth, we lost all credit, while that of the enemy rose to great heights. We had, it is true, our friends, but they had no weight.

Similar work was done in the countries allied to us. The object was to separate us from our allies.

Propaganda was an old and powerful weapon in England's hands. The East India Company had strik-



ing success with it in the conquest of India. Schools were set up in England. England was the only country that long ago had employed this weapon of politics and war with a clear vision, and on a really large scale, in the service of its national world-encircling policy.

"To threaten countries with the aid of revolution has for many years been the policy of England," said Bismarck sixty years ago. He was thinking of the speech of Canning on December 12, 1826, in which that Prime Minister threatened in a public sitting of the House of Commons that England controlled the winds of Æolus, and could at any time unchain the powers of revolution. "If we," he said, "take part in a war, we shall see gathered under our standards all the restless and dissatisfied (whether with or without a cause) of any country with whom we are in conflict."<sup>1</sup>

Even before the war careful watchers had clearly observed the propagandist activities of our present enemies. They were then already working systematically against us. It was mainly their propaganda that England and France had to thank for the success of their policy of undermining our position in the world. The disarmament proposals of the Tsar were their handiwork, and well adapted to the indiscriminating

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<sup>1</sup> The speech of Canning to which the writer refers will hardly bear the interpretation given in the text. According to the official report, Canning, in dealing with the proposal to make war against Spain on the side of Portugal, after pointing out that the war between Spain and Portugal, if it broke out, would be a "war of opinions," based on Spanish hatred of the constitutional government of Portugal, continued as follows:

"If into that war this country shall be compelled to enter, we shall enter into it with a sincere and anxious desire to mitigate rather than exasperate—and to mingle only in the conflict of arms, and not in the more fatal conflict of opinions. But I much fear that this country (however earnestly she may endeavor to avoid it) could not, in such case, avoid seeing ranked under her banners all the restless and dissatisfied of any nation with which she might come into conflict."

The reference to the winds of Æolus comes somewhat later in the speech and is unconnected with any suggestion for encouraging revolution in enemy countries.

credibility of many circles in Germany. The wide distribution in the English world was also part of the same work. It would have been better if it had never been written. We were to be cut off from the world by Reuter. Our political leaders apparently failed to observe the influence of the present Entente countries on the press of the world, although their attention was drawn to it often enough. They also did not see the effect of the little groups of French culture in the capitals of neutral countries with their opinions on those countries.

Even the Masonic lodges of the world, as had long been planned by England, worked with the whole mysterious strength of this most powerful of all secret societies in the service of the Anglo-Saxon, and thus, for us, of international politics. Only the national lodges in Prussia remained free of this influence.

In all the enemy countries strong propaganda organizations had been established under the guidance of experienced statesmen and politicians. Under a united leadership they worked everywhere with united strength, on clear and simple principles, and with ample funds. They had branches in neutral countries, where they achieved their aims with that utter lack of conscience which is so characteristic of the Entente. Special organizations dealt with the encouragement of national aspirations, particularly in Poland and among the Letts, and no doubt also among the peoples of the Dual Monarchy, especially the Czechs and southern Slavs.

While on the field of battle we held the initiative almost to the very end, the enemy carried on the war of intellect from the start with a united front, attacking along the whole line, and finding auxiliaries in the many deserters in the neutral states, and also, alas! support in Germany itself.

In England the whole propaganda service was placed under Lord Beaverbrook, with three directors, of whom Lord Northcliffe attended to the enemy countries, Kipling to home propaganda, and Lord Rothermere to the work in neutral countries. While England preferred to work principally in economical and political propaganda, military and culture questions were especially the function of France. This is typical of the point of view of our enemies. America, which at first assisted only financially (undertaking 50 per cent. of the whole propaganda expenses of the Entente), later took an active part in the work.

Italy, Belgium, and the remaining Allies, generously aided by American money, were also active in propaganda.

The expressed aim of the American and English propaganda became ever more and more the achievement of an internal revolution in Germany.

Lloyd George knew what he was saying when at the end of the war he expressed to Lord Northcliffe the thanks of England for the work he had done. He had proved himself a master in mass suggestion.

We found ourselves, bit by bit, attacked by enemy propaganda, by speech and writing, through the neutral countries, especially across our land frontiers with Holland and Switzerland, and also through Austria-Hungary and in our very own country, and, last of all, through the air, with such cleverness and on such a large scale that many people could no longer distinguish between enemy propaganda and their own sentiments. Propaganda wounded us all the more deeply in that we had to carry on the war, not with strong battalions, but with good ones. The value of masses in war cannot be denied, and without soldiers there can be no fighting. But numbers alone are nothing without the spirit that animates them; this is true both at home and

in the field. We have fought the world, and we could fight the world with confidence, so long as our spirits were sound. Just so long, too, we held prospects of success, and, which is the same thing, did not have to bow to our enemy's desire to destroy us. When our moral strength failed us the whole position was changed. We no longer fought to the last drop of blood and many Germans were no longer ready to die for their country.

The breaking of our morale at home, with its effect on our fighting capacity, the war against the home front and the spirit of the army, were, it is true, the main means whereby the Entente hoped to conquer us, after it had given up the hope of a military victory. I had no doubt on this point.

In the spring of 1918 a far-seeing Entente statesman made the following remarks:

"In London and Paris there is to-day a general fundamental belief that the German Army on the Western front will never be conquered by purely military means. But it is, nevertheless, clear that the Entente will win, and that by the internal conditions in Germany and the Central Powers, which will lead to the fall of the Imperial house. At latest in the autumn of this year the revolution will break out in Germany. It is quite clear to us that there are influential circles in Germany who would regard nothing as so bad as a military victory of Ludendorff."

This fitted strangely well the words of Spröbel, Member of the Prussian Diet and editor of *Vorwärts*, in 1915:

"I confess quite openly that a complete victory of the Empire would not be in the interests of Social Democracy."

I was reluctant to write these lines and let them go out to the world. But truth is truth and these words were spoken.

## VII

The Chancellor was responsible for the maintenance of morale at home. General Headquarters would have been glad to undertake direct counter-propaganda by explanation, but, in accordance with its duty, it always approached the Chancellor and begged him to act.

It was his duty to remove the unfortunately only too justified grounds for popular dissatisfaction, and especially to take steps against the abuses and excesses in war industries. They, with their regrettable accompanying disadvantages, were bound to awaken much indignation and to damage the morale of wide circles of society in a manner calculated to do infinite harm to our strength in the war. Profit-hunting, luxury, and selfishness overcame all honorable influences, but short rations also blunted the finer perceptions. Men standing in the trenches fighting the enemy had to fear that their jobs and their trades were being taken from them by others. It is very painful to look back and see how the German sincerity and honesty, the spotless personal cleanliness and the selfless thought for one's country were lost, and in their place came a wholly un-German idea, that the interests of oneself were the only law of life.

The Chancellor should have told the people whither they were drifting, and explained to them the whole of their serious situation. The Government should have explained again and again what was at stake, that an endurable peace could be won only from a defeated enemy, and that we would otherwise be the victims of a peace of violence. Only victory could save us from the latter or bring us the former.

Our political and intellectual immaturity and lack of critical faculty, which rendered us unable to perceive the emptiness of catch phrases and impossible

promises, were and are the cause of our misfortunes. I had always hoped that the people would force their way through phrases, catchwords, and political trickery to a view of the facts that really corresponds to realities. I was disappointed. The more the fire of domestic politics raged the more the gulf between class and class, town and country deepened, so the more did phrases, catchwords, and criminal delusions hold sway. Soon parties and party aims were of more importance than the country. The broad mass of the *bourgeoisie*, a confused mob, always knowing better than any one else and lacking all discipline, went its own way and stood isolated in its mental arrogance, its reluctance to act, its lack of character. It, too, had no sense of its responsibility to the country. It never thought what infinite damage it was bringing on the country and on itself. The lack of restraint and principle in wide masses of the people, the agitation of the Independent Socialists, found no counterweight among the *bourgeoisie*. It is a sad thing that in the hour of need usually clear-thinking men should lose their heads and take no action while they are robbed of all for which they have hitherto lived.

The *bourgeoisie* must share the blame for the collapse of the country.

The foundation on which the proud edifice of our army is built up was splitting; the spring that should renew our fighting strength was muddled.

Our War Chancellors have done nothing to put right the damage and clear the minds of the people. They had no creative ideas; they never gathered the people together and led them, like the great dictators, Clemenceau, Lloyd George, and Wilson. What General Headquarters could achieve by patriotic education and by transferring our foreign propaganda to home uses amounted only to giving crumbs to the hungry.

The mind of the German people remained rudderless and uncaptured, the prey of every influence that came. Ignorant and deluded, it sought after phantoms which could never be reached. It was thus only too comprehensible that it should hold to those who, either in fatal stupidity or accursed and criminal deliberation, offered it what it had long yearned for, and that it did not understand the men who saw the dangers of such conduct, and who, in anxious care for our future and sacred love for our country of our fathers, still urged them to fight on. It was a sorry thing that these men, although they, too, longed for peace, were soon branded as "never-endians."

The press furnished an exact mirror of the party quarrels that divided the German people and of their mental development during the war. Only a part of the press remained true to itself. Another part, from idealism, from motives of party politics, or simply from a sense of business, assumed as an established fact that improvement in the world that the advocates of a peace by understanding had invented, and abandoned the views it had held in 1914. Finally, there were newspapers who were ashamed of their attitude in the autumn of 1914, and of all their thoughts of a good peace. It even seemed painful to them to be reminded of such manly thoughts. Even during the war they slandered Germany to her sons and did everything possible to destroy the belief in German strength. In these papers, too, were challenges against our civil authority and order, to which the declarations of war against our social order were joined. I watched this development with deeply wounded patriotic feelings. These were serious warnings to take care, lest grave damage should be done to our fighting capacity, a *Mene Tekel* for the moral strength of the German people, and thus, too, of the German Army. All this

lay plain for our enemies to see, and much besides, and they no doubt gladly drew the inevitable inferences therefrom.

In August 1914 the whole press, fully convinced, had ranged itself on the side of the war of defense and had uttered fine words of determination as to the necessity of carrying the war to a successful issue. Unfortunately, there was later a change of tone in part of the press. It failed to realize that such a war of defense could not be ended by a peace of understanding, but only through victory, unless we were to be defeated and become the victims of unbearable conditions. As with the Government and the people, so also in this part of the press the thoughts of an understanding with the enemy grew stronger than the thoughts of victory, with all its heavy demands on an already suffering people. Many of the most widely circulating papers became the prophets of the new outlook, based on the reconciliation of the peoples. They attacked violently those who were unwilling to believe in the enemy's readiness for peace or, at any rate, were unwilling to weaken our own fighting strength, until the enemy had given some irrefragable proof thereof; they attacked, too, those who thought it accordingly necessary to keep their sword as sharp, and the arm that wielded it as strong, as was possible.

In this connection another idea was put forward, that the war could never be ended by a military decision—that is to say, by force of arms. No doubt the co-operation of the Government was required to enhance the effect of the military successes. But the last word rested with the mass of the population, there was no doubt. Were people really so ignorant of the enemy's real desire to destroy? Did not they understand the mind and the speeches of a Lloyd George or a Clemenceau? Why fight another battle if it is really un-



necessary to achieve victory or to escape defeat? Had they no idea of the state of mind of the man who had to leave his home, his wife, and children, his secure post, and to undergo hardship and danger, if it is, after all, useless, if he is merely risking the future of himself and his family? Could one not understand the man who, in continual danger, alone on a dark night in a muddy crater area, has to work forward to some point where hell awaits him, or the man who is due tomorrow for the long-awaited leave, and who to-day has to go on fighting, and perhaps to die? Ideas were thought out that were to bless the world, thoughts ran far into the future, and the hard reality of the present was forgotten. No one remembered the agony of conscience of the soldier who had to risk his life.

We were thinking of every imaginable thing; we ought to have been thinking of the war alone.

The press lacked the single guidance which was so remarkable with the enemy. Unled, it could so easily become not merely a useless, but positively a dangerous, weapon of war. That this was not the case in purely military questions, but that, on the contrary, it followed in noteworthy manner the instructions given to it, is a proof of its readiness to submit to a firm leadership based on mutual trust. There were, it is true, a few straying sheep, but, in the main, my request that military events should be discussed from this or that point of view was fulfilled. Here I must express my thanks for this. The quite comprehensible efforts to satisfy the reader's craving for novelty sometimes resulted in news, even of a purely military character, really exclusively designed to further the aims of enemy propaganda, finding its way into our press from neutral or enemy sources. When one adds the sensational padding and heading of such news that is so dear to a section of our press, then our enemies could

not desire better helpers in their propaganda work. It is not in my nature to seek the causes of such stupidity in ill-will or sensation-mongering. Short-sightedness was often at the bottom of such cases, and oftener still the great difficulties under which the press worked, the calling up of many trained men throwing an undue amount of work onto the editorial staff.

In the impression that I had gained of the situation I appealed in December 1916 to the Chancellor to establish under his direct supervision a bureau for the single control of the whole press of the Empire in all branches. I have always regarded the management of this matter by the Foreign Office as a most unfortunate arrangement, for that office thus gained an influence in internal politics which would have been better excluded. Of course, the interests of this department should be represented and respected, but the final control, respecting the interests of all departments, could be held only by the Chancellor, under whom, by the constitution, all the departments are set, and by whom all their interests are to be reconciled. In November 1916, at the request of the Chancellor, I appointed Lieutenant-Colonel Deutenoser to be attached to him, in the hope that after the departure of Privy Councilor Hammann something definite might be achieved by this appointment. The work which was allotted to the lieutenant-colonel did not correspond to my expectations. In details my demands had been directed to securing the control of all the press sections of the civil departments by some person of authority directly under the Chancellor; the close co-operation of this authority with the War Press Bureau and the Press Department of the Admiralty; the limitation of the Press Department of the Foreign Office to questions of external politics, and the intensification of its work in connection with enemy,

neutral, and allied newspapers; and, finally, the representation and promotion of the economic interests of the press by a central office.

Chancellor von Bethmann-Hollweg refused all my demands.

The united leadership of the press would have been a means of again calling into life a determined attitude of the German people and of getting rid of separatist tendencies. Explanatory counter-propaganda, which should be more thorough, should have begun instantly the enemy propaganda hit us. The speeches of statesmen and leading thinkers, and oral propaganda generally, should have been added. Every German, man or woman, should have been told daily what the loss of the war would mean to us. Pictures and the moving pictures should have been forced to preach the same. An explanation of our dangers would have had a different effect from the thought of war profits or talking and writing of the peace of understanding. And, what is equally important, it would have preserved us from our greatest danger and have served the cause of peace. I attempted to achieve it, and aroused considerable opposition.

The press of Saxony, Württemberg, and Baden retained an independent position, but took great trouble to achieve co-operation with us. The Bavarian press went, more and more as time passed, its own way in all respects.

All dealings with the press were made considerably more difficult by the lack of any single representation. Its organization was as confused as that of the corresponding imperial bodies. There was the "Press Committee," formed out of Berlin press representatives, the Union of German Newspaper Publishers, and the Imperial Union of the German Press. These organizations, again, were not similarly constituted. Here we had

editors, their publishers, and many other differences that showed how various they were. This, to my regret, really made impossible a strong, consistent rallying of our public opinion. I have always estimated the influence of the press very highly, not only that of the capital, but also the provincial.

The representatives of the press were always personally welcome to me, so far as my work allowed.

Communications between General Headquarters and the newspapers went through the War Press Bureau. This was formed in October 1915, out of various departments that had been established in the acting General Staff at the beginning of the war, whose duties were to read the home and foreign press and to act as censors. In the year 1917 the function was added of attending to patriotic education.

The most important civil departments of the Empire and Prussia had liaison sections at the War Press Bureau, and by the side of it stood the Press Department of the Naval Staff. The War Press Bureau has always worked in the closest co-operation with these departments.

The War Press Bureau, in accordance with its instructions, has always refrained from exercising any political influence upon the German press. All statements to the contrary are false, as are the suggestions that it acted as a sort of separate political agent for General Headquarters.

The importance of the War Press Bureau lay in its rigid organization, in the personnel of its co-operators, and in the lack of any unified imperial organization. The press was conscious of this. Its discontent was directed not so much against the War Press Bureau as against all the various press offices, which had no proper organization or control.

The majority of the unjustified attacks made upon

this bureau in the Reichstag were almost all due to ignorance of the exact scope of its functions. They merely show how impossible it was for General Headquarters, with the available means, to achieve any improvement in morale. The War Press Bureau was there, and people could form unfavorable judgments upon it, but they did not inquire into causes and assist me to get a large imperial bureau.

The discussions that took place twice weekly with the members of the Berlin press and the provincial press represented in Berlin, at which, in addition to representatives of the War Press Bureau, there were also present members from the Naval Staff and from all the imperial offices, were of assistance only to a section of the press. Speeches were accordingly given from time to time by officials of the imperial offices to representatives of the provincial press in different parts of the country.

One important function of the War Press Bureau was the study of the press of neutral and enemy countries.

At the front the army newspapers had become more and more important. The Press Office of the General Staff of the army in the field supplied it with material, and at the same time sent to small and medium-sized journals at home accounts of particularly heroic deeds of officers and men at the front.

In occupied France and in the prisoners' of war camps the *Gazette des Ardennes* did splendid work, winning the respect even of our enemies through its fairness and reliability. The same may be said of the *Russische Bote*, which was written in German and published under the direction of the Ministry of War.

The war correspondents of the great German dailies were grouped in press headquarters in the East and West, and, so far as the military situation allowed, were

informed as quickly and completely as possible of every new event, being given complete individual freedom. Within the necessary limits, they took part in the life of the troops and of the staffs.

There were further renowned military writers who described the war from a position of authority.

It was the duty of the War Press Bureau to secure uniformity of military views in the press at home, and obedience to the censorship regulations laid down by General Headquarters. It kept in touch with the same object with the press controls in the occupied districts, and from time to time took similar steps in co-operation with the military press censorships of our allies.

The censorship arrangements of General Headquarters extended to everything which might hinder the effective prosecution of the war, but it limited itself to this. At the same time, the head censorship office communicated to the military authorities at home the general principles laid down by the Imperial authorities. This led to serious misunderstandings and to the adoption of untenable points of view. It happened more than once that the home military chiefs described as instructions from General Headquarters censorship instructions which were merely passed to them in this way by the head censorship office, thus naturally created feeling against us. The control of the press was no part of the duty of the head censorship office, but simply of the General Officers' Corps. The office gave advice to the supreme military authority (the Minister of War) when asked to do so, and kept him informed of any events that in its opinion required his attention. General Headquarters was thus not in a position to take direct action against any newspaper, but could merely draw the attention of the Government, and in particular of the War Ministry, or in urgent cases of the Acting General Staff, if it thought

that the attitude of this or that paper was injurious to the prosecution of the war.

There was, legally speaking, no political censorship. This was a mistake, and the cause of much mischief. The Government itself often approached the head censorship office with the request that it would issue instructions in one sense or another. When I saw more clearly into this method of operation I protested against such an employment of the military censorship and put a stop to it.

The subordination of the head censorship to General Headquarters was not a happy arrangement. The office had been created in the conditions of the early days of the war, as an auxiliary of the General Staff. All censorship must excite opposition, and this will, of necessity, grow louder as pacifist feeling increases and home political movements feel their activities limited. General Headquarters suffered much from such protests. The appointment, in the autumn of 1916, of the Minister of War as the head of all military offices at home did something to ease my position over against the press. Unfortunately the Minister refused in 1917 to take over the head censorship office.

The press of our allies was more securely controlled by their Governments than was the case with us; in Bulgaria and Turkey, however, it had not the importance it possessed in Germany and Austria-Hungary. Our allies also exercised a severe political censorship.

In Austria-Hungary the Government failed to take any steps to maintain the morale or to rally the population to the fight. In their last fight for existence the Governments of the Double Monarchy were in no sense the leaders of its peoples.

There was little expression of opinion in Turkey, and only a little more in Bulgaria, where also the Government failed to lead the people.

It was, of necessity, very painful to see how often Germany was misunderstood in the press of her allies. Our Nibelungen loyalty, after all, was no mere empty word, and the German blood spilt on foreign fields should have earned us proper recognition. In the end Lieutenant-Colonel Nicolai succeeded in making definite arrangements for the publication of military news in the press of the Quadruple Alliance, which removed part of the trouble. Tours of journalists from the allied countries were also expected to bring useful enlightenment, but did not, in fact, make much difference.

In this matter also our Government failed to take any effective action. It should have undertaken explanatory propaganda on a large scale among our allies, and thus have done good service for the country for the post-war period as well.

Bit by bit the military foreign propaganda department established branches in the allied countries.

### VIII

Good propaganda must keep well ahead of actual political events. It must act as pacemaker to policy, and form public opinion without the consciousness of the people. Before political aims can be realized, the world has to be convinced of their necessity and moral justification. What one desires to achieve must be presented as simply a logical conclusion from events. We made no use of propaganda abroad; indeed, we hardly knew of it, although at home skilful work was done against certain persons. Our political aims and decisions, offered to the world as sudden surprises, seemed often to be brutal steps taken on the spur of the moment. This could have been skilfully avoided by broad far-sighted propaganda.

While we had not been ready for propaganda work



in time of peace, we were also lacking in the necessary equipment therefor. We had no world telegraph service, with its chain of cable and wireless stations. Efforts to remedy this had not yet been carried to fruition. We lacked a leading journal on a strong national basis, possessing influence abroad and weight at home, like *The Times* in England, the *Temps* in France, and the *Novoe Vremya* in Russia. All these three papers were independent, and stood on strong national platforms. The journals from which foreigners received direct information from Germany were all devotees of internationalism, fundamentally opposed to our form of government, and gave a false and one-sided picture of our life and thought and of the conditions in Germany.

In the matter of propaganda, we had much to catch up; we had to undertake the fight against the enemy at home and to work with all our strength for the extension of the submarine warfare, which was then just decided upon. We could not renounce the use of weapons of decisive effect.

I learned from discussions which I had with leading men that there was still, even during the war, considerable ignorance as to the real necessity of a propaganda possessed of living ideas and capable of seizing the popular imagination. The attitude of the Government was lukewarm and doubting. The authorities did not yet understand the essence of the matter. They were opposed to propaganda on the ground that it was too much like quack advertising, whereas true propaganda works in such a way that its activities are not observed; it works silently. Doubtless because it knew its own weakness, the Government thought that any wide and powerful counter-organization on our part against the enemy propaganda would be more or less a hopeless undertaking. This point of view or the remark, "Our cause is good, we need no advocate," could not

help us; we had every reason to take action, not merely expressly to defend ourselves, but also to move from defense to attack. Only so could we treat our enemy as he treated us and hold our own in the mighty World War.

When I came to General Headquarters I found only very scanty arrangements, hardly deserving of the name of propaganda organization.

I leave undiscussed the Erzberger Bureau, as I have no knowledge of its activities. It was later given up.

In the summer of 1916 General Headquarters had requested the Government to establish a strong propaganda organization. After many obstacles had been overcome, especially in connection with the Foreign Office, the military office of this department was set up.

Side by side with this office, which was set up for purely military purposes, the Foreign Office took up the question of the establishment of similar bodies for political and economic propaganda. It was only with this understanding that the Chief of the General Staff in the field had founded the military office. All the three bodies were on similar lines, laid down by the Foreign Office, to carry on wide and energetic counter-propaganda, not merely contenting themselves with weak defenses to the enemy's lies, but attacking the enemy propaganda. The political and economic propaganda service of the Foreign Office was, unfortunately, confined to a press and pamphlet service, which was mainly devoted to influencing the press by means of denials, discussions of political events, and exposures of enemy weaknesses. It was like dropping water on a hot stone, and was not of the least importance.

In the military department of the Foreign Office, Colonel von Haeften gradually built up a large organization. This was under General Headquarters, but

was in the main financed by the Foreign Office, which received in return the right of joint control and of dictating lines of policy, rights of which it made virtually no use.

Colonel von Haeften is an officer of unusually high intelligence and of burning patriotism, who undertakes every task with an energy born of his idealism, and who possesses the gift of constructive work and of carrying his fellows with him. What has been achieved is in all essentials the work of himself and his colleagues.

By word and picture, and, above all, by means of the moving pictures, Colonel von Haeften sought to obtain a secure footing in neutral countries.

Oral propaganda was held to be of the utmost importance. The passing of news from mouth to mouth was considered to be the best, because it is the most dangerous means of propaganda. The idea is planted, and no man knows whence it comes.

Propaganda by pictures and films was encouraged by the formation of a special graphic department, the "picture and film office," and later of the Universal Film Company, Limited. The film is a means of popular education, and Colonel von Haeften desired to employ it as such after the war, his war organization being designed to that end. Pictures and films, and illustrations in poster form, penetrate farther and have a stronger effect than writing, and thus have a greater influence on the great masses of the people.

At the same time, press propaganda was carried on by telegraphic, wireless, and correspondence service, other propaganda with pamphlets and lectures, and work was also done in connection with the neutral War Press camp. Above all, Colonel von Haeften sought by quick news distribution to find the way into the hostile portions of the neutral press.

Art propaganda was also encouraged. Here we perhaps did too much. The Foreign Office attached great importance to this, having indeed taken it up some time earlier.

At our embassies abroad and in neutral countries, and also in the occupied districts in the East, branch military propaganda offices were established as organs of Colonel von Haeften, working up, with an eye to the special circumstances of the country, the material supplied from the central organization, and then distributing it. They worked in the closest touch with the ambassador.

It was quite impossible that Colonel von Haeften alone could succeed in making up all the ground that we had lost in the long years before and after the outbreak of war, and in fighting on equal terms against the enemy propaganda and the public opinion commanded by it in the neutral countries, let alone in penetrating into the enemy countries themselves. The insular position of England and America made this impossible. The lines of attack upon France lay through Spain and Switzerland. From Spain we were cut off, and there was nothing left but the narrow Swiss frontier, as was the case with Italy also.

The German propaganda kept on its feet only with difficulty; in spite of all its trouble, its achievements, in comparison with its mighty task, were insufficient. We wrought no real effect on the enemy peoples. Among them a strong Government, determined and with its heart in the war, crushed with relentless violence every sentiment of weakness or softness that stirred, and every discussion about peace, above all, about a real "peace of understanding."

In neutral countries, and among our allies, too, we achieved nothing important.

We also attempted to carry on propaganda on the

enemy fronts. In the East the Russians were the creators of their own collapse, and our work there was of secondary importance. In the West the front was not rendered open to infection by the destruction of morale at home, and no success awaited the propaganda that we gradually introduced.

Matters would have been different if the Chancellor had supported Colonel von Haeften with all the strength of his high office and with real good-will. I often begged him to do something definite. It became indisputably essential to establish an Imperial Ministry of Propaganda. I laid all the more weight on this, as propaganda by the speeches of statesmen proved its worth ever more and more. Lord Northcliffe was quite right when he said that the speech of an English statesman was worth twenty thousand pounds, that if it was copied in the German press it was worth fifty thousand pounds, and that if the Germans did not reply to it it was worth one hundred thousand pounds. We had no effective answer to the barrage of speeches from enemy statesmen, and we never even thought of suppressing them. The fight against these speeches could not be undertaken by the military department of the Foreign Office, nor could it be done by anybody save an imperial office possessing special authority. At last a hesitating step was taken in this direction in August 1918, with quite incomplete results; besides, it was then too late.

Under these conditions it was quite impossible to achieve any unity of propaganda between Germany and Austria-Hungary, as was so remarkably well done among our enemies. We regarded everything as a "home" question that concerned only the one country or the other, instead of realizing that we were but one body, against which the enemy had raised his threatening arm for one destructive blow.

The army had no help from the strong propaganda directed from home. While her army was victorious on the field of battle, Germany failed in the fight of intellects against the enemy peoples.

## IX

In the autumn of 1916 the army received only scant moral support and encouragement from home, although there had not yet been any misunderstandings. The army was tired and very exhausted, but its spirits were good and its morale was high.

There was close and mutual liaison between the army and the homeland.

Leave was given as generously as possible. The number of men who obtained leave of absence was always less than the authorities or myself would like it to have been. Apart altogether from the military situation, transport conditions made it impossible to grant leave on the scale which I would have desired. In times of fighting stress leave had to be cut down.

The sick and wounded took home news of the army, and the army had news of home conditions from the stream of reinforcements and returned wounded.

The letter, newspaper, and parcel post worked well, and the army's choice of newspapers was not limited. Only certain organs of the Independent Social Democrats were forbidden. The right to ban any newspaper lay with the army staffs. I know of only a few isolated instances in which this right was exercised.

The army was still receiving adequate reinforcements. These had, however, to be used, not only for filling the ranks of existing formations, but also, however reluctantly, for forming new divisions, which were needed to give us a freer hand for operating against the expected attacks in the East and West. The

thirteen divisions thus constructed at a cost, it is true, of reducing battalion strength, were expected to be ready for the field in the spring of 1917.

One result of the trench warfare was that troops who were short of special companies established works companies of all varieties. These were, of course, permanently retained in their sectors, the men remaining behind when their divisions were removed. All sorts of difficulties arose from this, and everything suffered. A permanent works company was therefore formed in every division out of the men engaged in this special work, who *ipso facto* left their old formations. The battalions mainly affected by this were again reduced in numbers, a step necessary in any case, as the young company commanders were not equal to supervising properly the work of some two hundred men when out of action or to leading them in the field.

An artillery commander was allotted to each division. Many new formations were established in the field and in the heavy artillery. A special army field-artillery was set up, working wholly outside the divisional formations, and intended to strengthen the divisional artillery in the fighting-line. Nine batteries were insufficient for a divisional front of two to three kilometers, artillery requirements having risen to incredible heights.

The new organization was accompanied by new arming.

Our air forces, in particular our aeroplanes, were further developed. They had attained such strength that it seemed necessary to place them under a special General Officers' Corps, which should be directly under the Chief of the General Staff in the field. The first commander of the air forces was General von Höppner. This officer, who had proved his worth as chief of an army General Staff and as a commander, now did all that lay in his power to develop this branch of the future.

His second in command was Colonel Thomsen, who had hitherto himself commanded the air forces. In spite of the efforts of the General Staff in peace-time, we had begun the war with insufficient air weapons. Germany and the German Army owe it to the enormous constructive energy of Colonel Thomsen and of Lieutenant-Colonel Siegert, who worked at home, that our aircraft developed from success to success during the war. At the moment, the most important thing was to increase our pursuit squadrons, and to provide them with a good fighting-machine, without, however, reducing the supply of other varieties. Considerable attention was also devoted to bombing squadrons.

The airship disappeared from the weapons of the army. It provided too large a target. The navy continued its employment.

Anti-aircraft armament was perfected and increased in supply, and defensive arrangements at the front and at home were organized on the most complete scale. This cost us men and material, which the front had to do without.

Trench warfare offered no scope for cavalry. The formation of regiments of dismounted cavalry, in battalion strength, out of the cavalry regiments, which had already been undertaken, was now continued, and the Landsturm and Landwehr squadrons were broken up. Their horses were used for the artillery reorganization and for baggage-trains. The casualties in horses were extraordinarily high, and the import from neutral countries was hardly worth reckoning. The homeland and the occupied districts could not cover the losses. There were many reasons for the shortage. Our finer breeds had proved their worth, but our lighter horses were not of sufficiently good strain, and their breeding had not been adequately developed. The heavier horses turned out to be quite unequal to the stress of war.



General Headquarters was compelled to distribute the columns and trains which had hitherto been part of the divisional organizations, among the armies, and to attach them permanently to districts. With the continual relieving of the divisions involved in defensive fighting, the burden on the railways through the carrying of heavy baggage became too great. I much regretted the new arrangements which we were thus compelled to adopt, for the supervision and care exercised by the divisions were better than those of the armies and groups.

The construction of positions in the West was systematically revised, from the point of view of the new theory of deep organization of all positions, and also with the closest attention to the natural formation of the ground. In the East the positions could keep more of their old design. In addition to the construction of the two great strategic lines in the West there was much work to be done there at all parts of the line, the positions in Flanders, to the east of Arras, and at Verdun being deepened, while the Alsace-Lorraine line, where, so far, not enough had been done, was also strengthened. The army worked hard at these positions, the men understanding that they were digging for their lives. The labor that we received from home was insufficient for the many works that required construction along the far-flung front. We were thus forced, unfortunately, to employ troops on the work, and their time for rest and training was lost, it being impossible to fulfil both requirements. The armies wanted to continue construction, which seemed to them the most vital, while Lieutenant-Colonel Wetzell and I emphasized the necessity for training. There was a good deal of compromise in the matter.

For the education of the men for the coming great defensive battles, the "defensive fighting" orders were

worked out. Colonel Bauer and Captain Geyer, who had a well-developed sense of tactics and a clear mode of expression, deserve the greatest praise for this work.

In sharp contrast to the form of defense hitherto employed, which had concentrated in regular and easily recognizable lines, a broad defense was now organized in deep formations, mobile and handled in loose groups. At the end of the fighting the position should, of course, still be held by us, but the infantryman need no longer say to himself, "Here I must stand or fall," but had, on the contrary, the right, within a limited range, to give way in any direction before strong enemy fire. Any part of the line that was lost was to be recovered by counter-attack. The group (of a non-commissioned officer and eight men), the importance of which had been strongly emphasized by many intelligent commanders before the war, now became officially the unit of the infantry in fighting disposition. The position of the non-commissioned officer as group leader thus gained in importance. Tactics became more and more individualized. Having regard for the ever more scanty training of our reinforcements in officers, non-commissioned officers, and men, and the consequent falling off in discipline, it would have been a perilous undertaking, one, indeed, in which failure was regarded as probable by many soldiers of position, to have made any greater demands on the subordinate leaders and the rank and file.

The controversy raged furiously in my staff; I myself had to take part, and advocated the new tactics. The new Operations Order reaped advantages from every lesson we had gained in the Somme battles, both as to the employment of artillery and aircraft and as to the co-operation of the various branches. The order became a standard text-book for the whole army, and

for the forces of our allies, so far as conditions with them permitted. Without this last limitation the order presented dangers, for it made demands upon the men which could be fulfilled only by troops which, if no longer of first-class training, were at any rate thoroughly devoted and disciplined.

This "Defensive Fighting" order had as its complement the "Training Regulations for Infantry in War," which was drawn up in the Headquarters Staff of Gen. Fritz von Below. This document demonstrates this great leader's thorough grasp of the character of our infantry. My staff, too, worked out a great number of further orders for special branches and for field fortifications. The training order for the artillery was not completed in the course of the winter, but its main points were contained in "Defensive Fighting." It had become clear in the course of the war that the "gunners" could not be neglected, but that, on the contrary, their importance was increasing. In order to assist in their development, special monthly periodicals dealing with the guns and gunnery were prepared by the Director of Artillery at General Headquarters and distributed to the troops.

In all quarters there was a real spirit of activity in the army. We kept in close touch with the feeling of the army, which was supplied with the best that could in any manner be obtained.

Orders on paper were of themselves useless; they had to be ground into the flesh and blood of officers and men. We set up a course at Valenciennes for commanders of higher rank and for General Staff officers, to get rid of any ignorance as to the nature of defensive fighting. The German Crown Prince established a similar institution at Sedan.

Numerous and varied courses were established by the armies, in particular for the training of junior officers

as company commanders, and for non-commissioned officers.

For all branches the foundation of everything was the maintenance and improvement of discipline, without which no army can continue to exist. Discipline was also required, at this stage of the war, to counter-balance the many disadvantages affecting the life of the troops. The frequent alterations of formations and the constant changes of position made the accommodation constantly less comfortable, and the danger of the men seizing anything they wanted grew greater. The importance of "*Meum*" and "*Tuum*" was lost sight of. Clothing and equipment had deteriorated, and were consequently more difficult to keep in order. Many causes, not the least of which was the want of lighting arrangements in the dugouts, led to a neglect of outward appearances. The men "let things rip." Life at the front was bound to have an effect upon them. Upon strong characters it had a stimulating effect, but these were rare, and the morale of the bulk was sure to suffer increasingly so the longer the war lasted. Any thinking soldier would know that. It had, indeed, been the case in every war. The necessity for moral support from home to maintain the feeling of duty and discipline at the front was all the stronger, and the homeland could give such support only if its own morale was high. The manner in which the troops behaved themselves in public places and their saluting were sure tests of the condition of the army. Their conduct was by no means always good in this respect.

The infantry was trained in the new formations, and in musketry; courses for group and company commanders were continued everywhere.

The training of machine gunners was carried out on the most generous scale, and a special shooting-range built for the sharpshooter detachments.

On our artillery ranges the artillery improved its training in gunnery and its co-operation with aircraft. The dilution brought about by the extensive new formations had to be remedied by careful training on all parts of the front.

Trench-mortar batteries also, as well as pioneers and signalers, were allotted special schools and training-grounds, on which they studied the particular uses of their weapons; but the officers were trained also in other branches.

Training was carried on without interruption, both in the line and behind. The life was much the same as in peace-time. Everywhere efforts were made to fit the army for its heavy task and to keep the losses within bounds.

At home, work proceeded on similar lines. Conditions grew more and more difficult, the instructional personnel becoming obsolete. Food-supplies were short, and depot units were too much in touch with home and not in sufficiently close touch with the army. I always sought to transfer the training of reinforcements as far as possible to recruit depots behind the front. A start was made in this direction, and matters were carried farther at a later stage.

Naturally, all the leaders, myself included, took precautions that the troops should not become tired or stale under training. Physical rest was an absolute necessity for the very maintenance of discipline, and it was only by adequate stays in rest-billets that men could rid themselves of the effects of strain. They had to be provided with comfortable quarters. Proper recovery was impossible in empty huts, and we had to take over furniture and fittings from the civil population. Unfortunately this did not always remain in the district, the troops taking it with them when they were moved. As for amusements, there were the military

bands which were very popular, numerous physical games, performances of various sorts, and libraries of books.

The ranks of the regular non-commissioned officers were greatly thinned. Many of them had, like the regular officers, fallen in battle and others had been transferred to new formations or sent home for instructional duties. The men promoted from the troops at the front to take their places had not had sufficient training in leadership or in care for the men. Discipline was impaired by life in the trenches, where differences of rank disappeared for the time, and the risk that the new non-commissioned officers could not obtain the requisite degree of authority was inevitable. The bulk of the non-commissioned officers proved to be excellent subordinate leaders in the field and trustworthy aids to the officers; they fulfilled their difficult work loyally, and the country owes them a debt of gratitude.

The officers were fully conscious of their important duties as trainers and teachers of their men. This, too, will in the end be recognized. In peace-time it took from twelve to fifteen years before an officer commanded his company. By that time the accomplishments which fitted him for his task—service, experience, handling of men, care for his subordinates—had become second nature to him. During the war young men of two or three years' service had to lead companies. Many succeeded, but others were lacking in various respects. The capacity for such leadership is a gift, the result of upbringing and of human tact. Zeal and courage were not of themselves sufficient. Everything was done at home and at the front to insure the thorough training of company leaders, but there is no doubt that the complaints of the men as to their inexperience had only too much justification. This was a matter of the greatest seriousness, involving the danger of destroying the

admirable relations that had hitherto existed between officers and men.

The excellent regular officers, so often the object of attacks, were no longer available; they lay beneath the turf. In the short period of the war it was impossible to train a new generation of these men with the same high professional qualities, the same thorough knowledge, and the same sense of responsibility for their men as had been possessed by the men trained through a long course of years. Nothing could provide a more striking justification of our whole army system than the events of this war. A well-known Social Democratic member of the Reichstag, who visited me as a war correspondent at Kovno, emphasized especially how fundamentally he had been compelled to alter his opinion of the regular officers. He said that in his view they looked after their men with the most thorough devotion and understanding, and that officers drawn from the non-active list found it difficult to keep pace with them. I was greatly gratified by this frank and striking admission.

In the circumstances there should have been more frequent promotion of regular non-commissioned officers to commissioned rank. This was done here and there. My former regimental clerk in Düsseldorf was an officer in an active regiment as early as the autumn of 1914.

Owing to the insufficient training and lack of experience, especially in routine duty, of the company commanders, the position of battalion commander became more prominent and important. Unfortunately, battalion commanders were often drawn from the non-active list, and were thus naturally somewhat deficient in knowledge of routine duties, although, owing to their greater age, they were more reliable. The war must have made heavy demands upon men of their age, for

in defensive fighting they had to go into the front line again and again. Both their health and their nerves were subjected to the greatest strain. They did admirable work in battle, as admirable, indeed, as that of the battalion leaders of the active list.

The duties of regimental commanders were varied and exceptionally arduous. They were everywhere directly responsible for their troops, and had to answer to their superiors for the appearance and morale, the success or failure, the weal or woe, of every single man under their command. The outward appearance and the true value of the troops, and especially of the officers, were indicative of the personality, the will, the capacity, of the commander. He had to inspire his officers and men with his own spirit; he was their example and their stay, their counselor and friend in rest and in the line.

In trench warfare it was more difficult for him to influence his officers and men, but in the end he could make his impression upon them. These regimental commanders were often wounded, and frequent changes were thus necessary. There was often insufficient time for a commander to gain the confidence of his regiment. Some commanders, however, retained their regiments for very long periods, sometimes for almost the whole of the war. Some of them, owing to heavy losses, had to renew their regiments completely three or four times. That involved too heavy a demand upon them, although no doubt something of the traditions of the regiment survived all through.

Next to the regimental commander the most prominent position was occupied by the divisional commander, his position being similar to that of the general officer commanding in peace-time. Hard as General Headquarters strove, it proved impossible, in the constant troop movements involved by position



warfare, to maintain corps formations; this was a decided general disadvantage. The divisions gradually acquired in every respect greater independence, and the divisional commander thus became more prominent. Through his headquarters passed all threads from above and below, for combatant work, training, and administration. He was the educator of his troops. It was impossible to devote too much care to the selection of these officers.

The General Staff officer was, so to speak, a specialty. As the war became more technical, his duties were more difficult. It was no longer sufficient for him to have a general knowledge of the uses of all arms. He had to be a good artilleryman and, in addition, to possess a clear knowledge of the use of aircraft, of the signal service, of the supply of reinforcements, and of a thousand other things, while he further had to master many details which the divisional commander had no time to settle. In spite of every effort to keep them reasonably brief, the orders which he had to draft grew ever longer and more complicated. The more technical the war became the more did these orders grow into veritable works of art, involving infinite skill and knowledge. There was no other way, if things were to be properly co-ordinated. All this complication often compelled the General Staff officer to keep many matters in his own hand. Precautions had to be taken that the independence of other headquarters did not suffer through this procedure, and that the commander, too, was not "shelved." I could not have permitted either of these developments.

The commanders maintained their position. They were the leaders and trainers of their troops, and could not be in too close touch with them. The General Staff officer was their helper and adviser and was responsible for the smooth and co-ordinated working of the ma-

chinery. Their tasks were different, but there was plenty for both to do; they had this in common, that they had to take the greatest care of the troops. The General Staff officer of the division had no separate responsibility, this falling on the corps and army leaders, so far as that was possible in conditions in the field. The duty of the General Staff officer was to keep in the background and to work without ceasing.

The selection and training of General Staff officers was difficult. I accepted only officers who had fought in the front line. War experience, however, and the education given in the special courses held at Sedan, formed no real substitute for the thorough training of peace-time. General Headquarters did have some complaints from the troops against them, mainly on account of their youth, but on the whole they were highly respected. General Headquarters itself required a large number of officers, who were thus lost to the fighting branch. I had to take young men, to avoid the withdrawal of too many officers capable of commanding. I found among my officers thus selected many clever, manly, and honorable men, who understood their work and carried it out with tact. The Socialist leader, whom I have already mentioned, told me (also in contradiction to his former views) that he regarded the staff as the soul of the conduct of the war. And so it was.

I have been told since the end of the war that from personal motives the General Staff did not render me true reports, but always gave too favorable a description of the situation. This allegation is not true and is an insult to the General Staff, to which the army owes an immeasurable debt.

I have always had the greatest respect, not merely for the General Staff, but also for officers in general. I regarded the officers as the backbone of the army. In

one of my last drafts, in October 1918, I stated that in my view they were called upon to take a decisive part in the reconstruction of the country.

Our officers fulfilled their duty. Their terrible losses are a proof of that. It cannot be urged as a reproach against them that many of their number had insufficient experience, for this was due simply to war conditions and to their heavy losses. These inexperienced men, at any rate, knew how to go bravely to their death. In the stress and danger of battle the men always relied upon and looked up to their officer, even when he was but a boy. Even if the officers never achieved the right attitude to their men, if some of them were even bravely lacking in their duty to the ranks, that is nothing against the Officers' Corps in general. Things were what in war they must be.

In the long period of trench warfare, the subordination of the minor leaders increased to a regrettable extent. This was a most unfortunate development, due in part to the ample supply of telephones, but also to some extent to the inexperience of the subordinate leaders. Every leader needed scope for his activities. Again and again I insisted, both with the various staffs and at General Headquarters, that there should be no limitation of these leaders' authority, which would be fundamentally wrong organization.

The training of the army for defensive fighting involved most varied tasks for General Headquarters. I had the gratification of knowing that the General Staff in the West was in agreement with our policy and measures.

Of course, at the end of January 1917 nothing had been completed. The new formations and reformations were still under way. The army was beginning gradually to strengthen itself. The troops had suffered severely. The general principles of the new

regulations were understood, but had not been thoroughly instilled into the troops. The supply of material was still in arrears. In spite of all our pains, in spite of incessant labor, the strain on the Western front had not been greatly relieved.

In the East and in Rumania also work was proceeding energetically on the same lines as in the West. The Commander-in-chief in the East and General von Mackensen were intrusted with the necessary modifications for the conditions of that theater. In the main, the troops there were in the same state as in the West.

Training was also intensified in the Austro-Hungarian Army, but progress here was slow.

General von Below had also taken charge of the Bulgarian Army, but we were unacquainted both with their language and their national sentiment. It was very difficult for us to make much progress in the face of Bulgarian mistrust of German tutelage. Nevertheless, the spirit of the Bulgarian Army began to improve, although the Bulgarian General Headquarters itself did nothing actively to assist in the training.

In the Turkish Army, Liman Pasha alone worked seriously. The Turkish troops in Galicia and Rumania were trained on German lines, and not without success. There they were satisfactory, while on other fronts they counted as second rate.

General Headquarters did all it could to strengthen our fighting forces in quality. Meanwhile, however, the attempt to increase our forces through the formation of a Polish army, and thus to wipe out the numerical superiority of the enemy, had been a sorry failure.

## X

The employment of the fighting strength of the Poles, whom we had freed from the Russian yoke, was im-

portant for the successful prosecution of the war. I had already earlier given the matter my consideration, and ultimately I sanctioned recruiting for the Polish Legion. They would not, however, join us. The Russian Poles held absolutely aloof, and there seemed no prospect of any alteration in the composition of the Polish Legion, which was drawn mainly from Galician Poland.

In the earlier stages of the war Poland counted upon becoming independent with the help of Russia. A manifesto of the Grand Duke Nicholas had promised the restoration of the Kingdom of Poland within its former frontiers, under the kingship of the Tsar of Russia, and this had doubtless made a great impression upon all the Poles. They could not expect to gain their independence by throwing in their lot with us, unless we could overthrow Russia. This we had to attempt also on military grounds. It seemed to me possible that Poland would give her sons to a fight for freedom from Russia. Here, as indeed in many other matters, their interests were really identical with ours.

When I became Quartermaster-General, on August 29, I found that there was an agreement in existence, made on August 11 in Vienna by the Chancellor with Baron von Burian, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the double monarchy, which bound Germany and Austria-Hungary to establish an independent kingdom of Poland, with a hereditary monarchy and a constitutional government and a national army under a single leadership, which was to be intrusted to Germany. The proposed foundation of this state was to be announced by both countries as soon as possible, but it was not to be actually established until later. Vilna was to be included in the new territory, whose frontiers, to the extent that this could be achieved in the treaty of peace, were to be extended as far as possible to the East.

This new Poland was to be accepted as a member of the alliance of the two empires and its foreign policy was to be formed in accordance with this association.

The two Central Powers guaranteed to each other their hitherto existing Polish possessions and provided for the frontier modifications which would have to be made for the better security of their territory at the expense of Russian Poland. Such claims were to be limited to strict military necessities. In the autumn of 1914 and 1915 Von Bethmann had frequently asked for my views as to the proper demarcation of this frontier.

Views differed as to the economic future of Poland. Von Bethmann aimed at its incorporation in the German customs union, but this went too far for Baron von Burian, who wished to see a separate Polish tariff system. Expression was given to the desire of both parties that the customs and transport restrictions which still separated the German and Austro-Hungarian districts should be as far as possible eliminated.

No reservations were made for the possibility, which was certainly highly unlikely, of a separate peace with Russia.

It was clear, and the characters of both Von Bethmann and Baron von Burian made it certain, that this agreement could not have been reached without very long discussions, which had probably started as early as the year 1915.

In any case, the Chancellor had stated on April 5, 1916, that the Polish question was ripe for settlement, and that Germany and Austria-Hungary would have to find the solution.

The General Governor in Warsaw had also attacked the problem of raising a Polish army and had arrived at conclusions highly favorable thereto.

The establishment of the Kingdom of Poland, with

an army of its own, was now decided upon by this agreement. The General Governor of Poland regarded the formation of this army as not merely possible, but, as a result of his inquiries, as containing high promise of success. The uncommonly difficult military situation made an equalization of strength more than urgent. General Headquarters felt, of course, compelled to take up the proposal for the formation of a Polish army. Any hesitation would have been wrong, for it was a question of victory or defeat, life or death, for Germany. What might arise later could be left to be dealt with when it did arise. The position of the war at the beginning of September had made only too clear to all of us the danger in which we stood.

There were shortly afterward held in Pless a series of discussions of the Polish question, at which General von Beseler was present, between the officials responsible for the policy and military operations of Germany and Austria-Hungary. These were of importance to me only so far as they dealt with the possibility of obtaining a Polish army to reinforce our own.

General von Beseler held to his favorable view, although General von Conrad uttered a strong warning against any optimistic attitude. The former stated that a fundamental condition for complete success was the proclamation of the kingdom and the establishment of a homogeneous government in Poland by the amalgamation of the two Governments of Lublin and Warsaw. Until that was done the Poles would not be convinced that the Central Powers were really in earnest as to the carrying out of their Polish proposals. I thought that there must be a great deal of truth in this. In the interests of the creation of this new army, I pressed the proposed amalgamation of the two Governments earnestly upon Baron von Burian. The statesmen could not come to any agreement. The wishes of the

double monarchy and the fear of domestic difficulties were more important to Baron von Burian than the interests of the common prosecution of the war. The amalgamation of the two Governments, advocated by General Headquarters and by General von Beseler, was dropped. General von Beseler, nevertheless, thought that it would still be possible to form an army if the Central Powers proclaimed the establishment of the Polish Kingdom. He proposed that for the start four or five divisions should be formed, for which the Polish Legion should form the nucleus. He hoped to be able to place these divisions at the disposal of General Headquarters in April 1917, and then to proceed with the formation of further ones. It was not much, but it did offer us the hope of some increase of strength. The war might still last for years, and every new addition to our forces should be welcomed. The military situation compelled us to agree to General von Beseler's proposal, and General Headquarters accordingly adopted the policy which he held to be possible.

The Imperial Government now undertook the carrying out of the program of Von Bethmann and Baron von Burian for the creation of the Kingdom of Poland, while we discussed with General von Beseler and the Austro-Hungarian General Staff the raising of a Polish army.

Under-Secretary Wahnschaffe entreated me to express to Minister von Löbell my views as to the necessity for the Polish army. I did so, stating in a private letter that the real ground of this necessity was the iron need of more men for the war.

I was not acquainted with the details of the proceedings in Berlin. The Chancellor and General von Beseler warmly advocated the raising of the Polish army and the establishment of the kingdom. There was, however, in many quarters in Germany considerable oppo-



sition to this latter step. Rumors soon circulated from Berlin that I was the author of the plan. I repeatedly requested the Government to explain the matter properly, but there was, unfortunately, in spite of my request, not a statesman to be found who was willing to present the whole position in its true aspect. Just as in the question of the submarine campaign, so now, in the autumn of 1916, General Headquarters was for the second time involved without any act of its own in a political controversy; on this occasion, moreover, the result was to hinder the work of the war. Was it surprising that I felt absolutely disgusted by this procedure? Everybody who worked with me knows that I was always ready for frank discussion, and listened willingly to arguments against my views, but that I insisted on absolute honesty.

I was called in by the Chancellor to assist in drafting the proclamation for the foundation of the Kingdom of Poland.

In my view the proclamation was ambiguous, and I said so.

The declaration of the kingdom on November 5 and the steps taken to form a Polish army proved to be a plowing of the sands. We soon saw that General von Conrad had correctly foreseen events. I had to abandon finally all hope of our army being strengthened by Polish troops. General von Beseler, too, recognized that he had been mistaken. Thus ended for good the question of forming a Polish army. The idea of forming any sort of national troops in Poland, which was mooted from time to time subsequently, and was at times advocated by General von Beseler and the Austro-Hungarian Government, was henceforth received unfavorably at General Headquarters. In view of the ambiguous attitude of Poland, any arming of that country presented dangers which it was as much our

duty to avoid as it had previously been to make the attempt to obtain reinforcements from that country.

Any amount of time and energy was wasted on these fruitless negotiations, in which the only point of interest was provided by the perseverance with which the Austro-Hungarian statesmen pursued their anti-German ends in Poland.

The formation of a Polish army failed for political reasons, Poland apparently preferring to achieve her ends against Germany and Austria-Hungary with the aid of the Entente. Man-power she had in plenty, even after sending labor to Germany and Austria-Hungary. In this sense the man-power question had no influence upon the problem of the formation of an army. Naturally, we continued to make every effort to recruit labor in Poland on the largest possible scale and to make use of the country for the prosecution of the war.

To attribute the present conditions in Poland and our Eastern districts to our attempt to establish the kingdom shows a complete lack of proportion. If the kingdom had never been proclaimed, if the attempt had never been made to raise an army, events would have followed the same course, for their true causes are to be sought in history, in the strong national sentiment of the Poles and the traditional hostility between Poles and Germans.

In the discussions concerning the establishment of the Kingdom of Poland and the formation of the Polish army we touched also upon the possibility of a separate peace with Russia, and the difficulties which inevitably arose for the conclusion of such a peace from the Polish ambitions of the Central Powers. A separate peace with Russia has always been prominent in the thought of the German people; as early as the autumn of 1914 I received "authentic" news of the presence of Count

Witte in Berlin. This was, of course, no more than an empty rumor, England and France having then much too firm a hold on Russia. Stürmer had for a long time now been the Premier, and there was again talk of the possibility of peace being secured through his activities. Naturally, peace with Russia would have been more welcome to me than the whole Polish army, with the whole Kingdom of Poland thrown in, to which, as a native of the province of Posen, I naturally had a strong instinctive repulsion. The Polish army could at best provide only a few divisions, which were not to be weighed in the scale against the relief which we should experience by the disappearance of Russia from the ranks of our enemies. It was a very simple calculation, upon which I need not waste words here. The difficulty was that, here as elsewhere, wishes and hopes did not bring peace, and that the Government and the diplomats did not seem to get farther than wishes and hopes. Doubtless they felt that there was no real ground for these hopes, or they would not have arranged in August for their Polish program, which was aimed directly against Russia. They did not proceed beyond considerations of the question such as might be held at any time. There was never any real talk of even a reasonable possibility of getting into touch with Stürmer nor the remotest suggestion of any move on his part. No one really believed in the possibility of concluding peace with Russia. The military situation in September and October did not favor it, even although the Entente must have perceived by October that its great autumn campaign of 1916 would not succeed. On October 21 the Chancellor stated that there was then no prospect of a separate peace with Russia, who was much too closely dependent upon England.

To establish for General Headquarters the guiding

principles for the further prosecution of the war and to strengthen our forces, I had a great field of activity to cultivate. I could, of course, not do all the plowing and sowing with my own hand. Where I found intelligent co-operation and the same serious view of the situation as I held myself, I sowed good seed; it often sprouted but scantily, however, and the field gave no yield. Weeds, too, grew up and choked what had so far grown well.

END OF VOL. I





















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